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THE TRUE STORY OF BERNARR MACFADDEN

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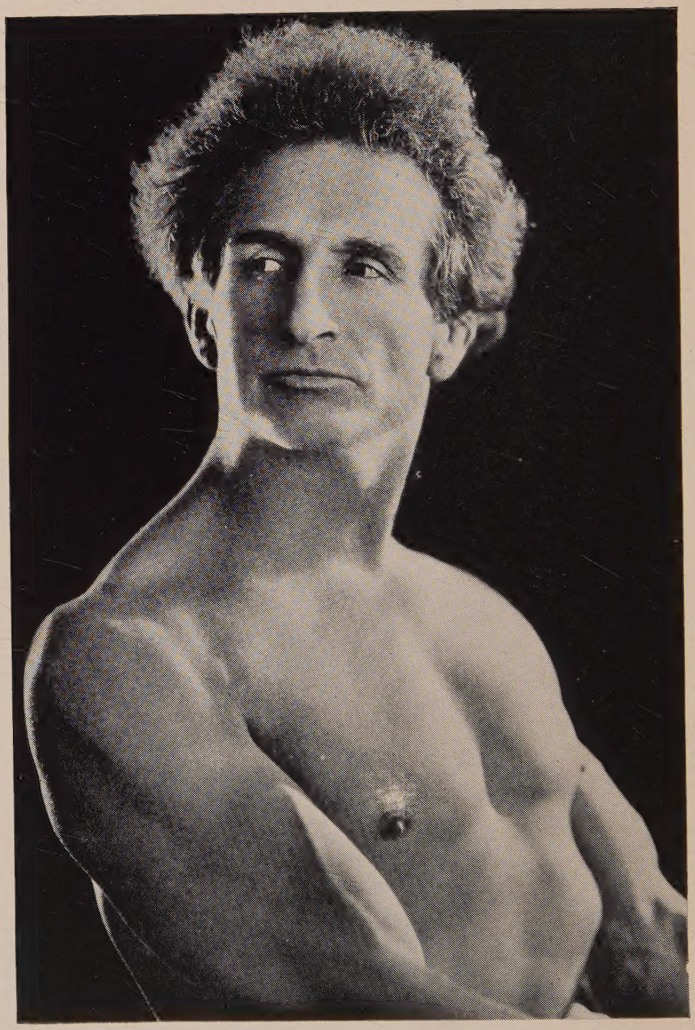

Bernarr Macfadden at sixty years of age.

THE TRUE STORY OF BERNARR MACFADDEN

by

FULTON OURSLER

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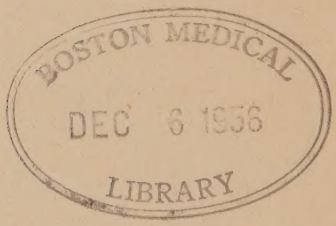

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The True Story of Bernarr Macfadden

CHAPTER I

The Strong Man's Story

It was eight o'clock in the evening in the Winter Garden at Berlin.

The vast auditorium was thronged and glowing with lights. High in the curved roof gleamed a painted sky sparkling with electric stars. On the *terrasse* gay parties chatted and laughed, while waiters came and went with their trays of glasses and bottles. The band blared and crooned and then, as the lights dimmed out, the music crashed into a mighty chord.

The curtain lifted and the performance began.

An athlete strode upon the stage; a strong man whose mighty body was bare, except for a jungle skin wrapped about his loins. What a physique! His arms were like Samson's, strong enough to pull down the pillars of this temple of entertainment. Here, one felt, must be the strongest of all the strong men; a young Hercules ready for a Titanic demonstration of strength.

He lay upon his back and twirled immense weights around and around, moving them with his bare toes alone. He lifted men and women as if they were dolls. High over his head he raised great weights, smiling

with a serene confidence all the while, as if to a man of such skill and strength it were not so difficult a feat as we weaker mortals might suppose.

Europeans love such demonstrations of might and physical power. When the performance was over, the din of the applause was deafening. Again and again the strong man bowed his thanks.

I turned to my companion, curious thoughts stirring in my head.

"Suppose," I said, "there were a prophet sitting with us at this table tonight?"

"Well?"

"Suppose this prophet were to tell us that before many years the strong man there would step down from the stage and become one of the most important figures in influencing the thoughts, habits and development of the common people of this country."

"No."

"You would not believe it?"

"It would be impossible."

"Impossible is a big word."

"Then it would be almost impossible," he qualified.

"But why?"

"Because the development of a body such as that man displayed here, the acquirement of such strength, is the work of a life-time. It is, in its way, a great test of character. One has to give to it everything one has. It takes all a man's time and all his character. Your strong man wouldn't have the time or the capac-

ity to develop into anything else. What on earth made you think of such a thing?"

I did not tell him then, for my thoughts were busy in quite another direction. What my friend had said sounded true enough. The average strong man would have time only to be a strong man. To be anything else would be a kind of miracle.

Yet I knew that such a miracle had come to pass before the eyes of this generation of Americans.

For once, at least, and here in the United States a strong man, a wrestler, an athlete had stepped over the ropes of his arena, put on his street clothes and made himself a living force in the lives of his fellow-men. Now more than twenty-five millions of people in his own country hear him monthly, weekly, daily with the closest attention, while still other millions in all parts of the earth also listen to his doctrines and are advised by his counsels.

What my friend had believed impossible in Germany was an actual fact in the United States—made so by the life and work of Bernarr Macfadden.

For the moment I am not concerned with the question raised by Macfadden's antagonists as to whether this influence is good or bad. That, here, is quite beside the point. I am dealing simply with the facts.

It is a fact that Bernarr Macfadden wields an almost incalculable influence in the lives of millions of people. True, he is not the first publisher whose magazines and books have had circulations of magnitude, nor

will he be the last. But he is the only publisher of his time whose own personality pervades a magazine and book distribution of such magnitude. Moreover, he is the only publisher of his time who takes his own philosophy with a religious seriousness. I do not know any other publisher in America today who would die for his ideas. I think Macfadden would die two or three times over for some of his; more than once he has risked death to prove himself right.

It is with a crusading passion that he exhorts the millions who hear him with such reverence. There is the living vigor of the evangelist in his daily enthusiasms.

Such a man is bound to be a problem to those who disagree with his ideas. When he has the ear of many millions, he becomes a national problem. Macfadden is all of that.

There is more to the strange story of Bernarr Macfadden and his rise from obscurity to fame and power and their possessions than merely a tale out of the school of Horatio Alger. He is both a cause and a symptom. He has played a part in his times bigger than either his friends or his enemies suspect. What posterity may accord him does not matter. Beyond any question, it will receive from him an inheritance; an endowment which it will be glad to use.

What will be the nature and quality of that bequest?

No off-hand answer can be given to such a question, just as no off-hand opinion of Macfadden and all his

works will suffice. The man has said and done too much, and what he has said has been heard by too many people, what he has done has been too effective, to be dismissed so readily. One must study his career from its humble beginning onward, study it honestly and without prejudice, before venturing an opinion. Even then it can be only an opinion. More than once, as his life will readily disclose, Macfadden was twenty years ahead of his time. There was the absurd time when old Anthony Comstock declared war because the physical culturist was exhibiting athletic girls in tights in Madison Square Garden! That was more than twenty years ago! Perhaps the very ideas for which he is criticized today may likewise be commonly accepted, in another twenty years.

Therefore, it would be foolish to try to judge Bernarr Macfadden and his work today. That will be a task for the future, when he, together with his friends and his enemies, have passed from the scene.

On the other hand, his own story can cast upon the matter a ready and informing light.

There are three Bernarr Macfaddens. Indeed, if one knows him intimately, one soon becomes aware of more than three; of many personalities in one body, a complex individuality, yet with a simple and resolving spirit. But there are three distinct phases of the man that are important to the public. One is the physical culturist, another is the magazine publisher, the third is the newspaper proprietor and editor.

Macfadden has played all three parts energetically and successfully; he has played them simultaneously, and he continues to do so with an industry and personal application and success that have won for him the support of a large part of the public, baffling his competitors and enraging many interests whose fields of activity he has invaded.

First and above all things he is the physical evangelist, the apostle of health, the missionary to the ailing, the halt and the maimed. Nothing else matters so much to the man as this. For it he has the fervor of the patriot and the zeal of the martyr. Like a John out of the wilderness, he has emerged from the farmlands of Missouri, calling men to repentance for their sins against their vigor and their strength; preaching a doctrine of Spartan simplicity that will give them a new birth in health and vitality.

One must understand this zeal thoroughly, if one would understand Macfadden at all. His victories as an editor and publisher are of little consequence to him, placed beside his endeavors in the field of health. To talk with him for only a little while is to be convinced of this irrevocably. Once he is led to speak of physical culture, the man is transformed. His face lights up with a glow. His head is thrown back and there is a clear gleam in his eye; his voice vibrates with feeling. This is the Macfadden of today, after more than forty years of constant laboring in that field; his enthusiasm for his work is as keen as when

he threw his first wrestling partner, and saw his system of development first change an invalid into a healthier and happier man.

Physical culture is the corner stone on which he builds all his theories. Beneath every human problem Macfadden discerns a physical cause. All the vexing questions of these curious days seem to him to revert finally to the body and its mental and spiritual influence. Long before Sigmund Freud had put such words as complex and libido upon the lips of high-school girls, Macfadden, the physical culturist, was fully aware of the two great hungers, of food and love, and how they exercised the human ego.

And if he did not befog his thoughts with a terminology borrowed from Greek fairy tales, he knew the truth instinctively. He did not consider himself a psychologist. But he had found what Freud had also found; that the hungers of the body, the disregard of the body, and the old shameful tabu of the body which made a good girl ashamed to take a bath because God would see her naked, that these hideous profanities of prudery were a prime cause of much of all the moving misery in the world.

I recall one winter night, when he and I were walking around the outside of Central Park, that he gave me a vivid example of how his mind works upon such matters; how, like a chemical retort, it resolves a number of elements into their simplest solution.

We passed an apartment house, and the curtains of

one of the first floor suites were raised; inside the lights were glowing softly.

We caught a brief and dramatic glimpse of that room.

Sprawled on the sofa lay a man. His coat was off; his head was thrown back, exposing his neck with its thick rolls of red fat; his mouth was wide open; his eyes were closed; he was asleep. A crumpled spill of newspapers lay near him on the floor. A pretty woman sat opposite him in a chair. She was gowned for the evening, and she was younger than he; a woman full of the glow of life. So restless she looked, and so unhappy!

All this we saw in one brief glimpse and then we had passed on.

"There!" said Macfadden, with an angry shake of his head. "There is one of next year's divorces."

"It looked that way," I admitted.

"That woman won't wait much longer for that fellow to wake up," he predicted. "Isn't it terrible to think that we are powerless in such a situation? I should like to ring their doorbell and tell them what to do."

"Do you mean to say that you believe physical culture would prevent that divorce?" I asked, feeling somewhat like Watson in his earlier conversations with Sherlock Holmes.

"I certainly do. The absence of the principles of physical culture in the lives of people is the greatest

single cause at the bottom of most of our divorces. Take that couple as an example. That man has worked all day in an office. Probably the air in his office is very bad. He looked like the kind of man who works in an airless office. And I am sure the sun doesn't shine on his desk. He looks like a man who would get out of the sun if it made him the least bit uncomfortable. I *know* that he eats too much lunch."

I agreed with the deduction there.

"Now what does he do?" demanded Macfadden. "He comes home and eats a great big dinner. Then he lies down and reads the sporting pages of his newspaper. By that time his brain is so dulled, and his stomach is working so hard to digest a lot of unnecessary and unwholesome food that he hasn't the strength to get up and pour himself another drink of poison bootleg liquor. In a very little while he has gone to sleep."

"And the lady?"

"Yes! The lady! She's all dressed up and she has no place to go! How long is any high-spirited woman going to stand for that?"

He stopped and put his hand on my shoulder.

"But don't get the idea," he added seriously, "that men are the only offenders in that regard. The women are often the ones at fault. Their refusal to follow a sensible and reasonable diet makes them gross and fat and costs them all the charms by which their husbands were first attracted to them. I make it as a

statement capable of demonstration that a large proportion of divorces, in fact, the great majority will be found to have a physical cause at their foundation—whether it is loss of the power to charm, of the necessary physical vitality, or of perpetual bickering, infidelity—the secret of them all will be found in bodies that have not been treated properly. From this I do not exclude cases of palpable mismating. A marriage must be a wedding of the body, mind and spirit, but if the first is wrong, the other two cannot rectify that wrong and trouble is bound to result."

Thus Macfadden looks upon life and its multiplied complexities. Without a sound body, nothing can mean as much as it can mean with a sound body. "Weakness is a crime; don't be a criminal," was printed in black letters on the front of his magazine for many years. For a while it was a catch-phrase on the tongue of the man in the street. Macfadden urges you to postpone your funeral. Your criminals are sick men. Your failures are sick men. Your revolutionists are men whose bodies are under-nourished. The source of every problem of the individual, if followed through, will be found somewhere in his body. Great scientists have spent life-times in laboratories, only to confirm this elemental diagnosis.

And for a prescription, Macfadden entreats you to save yourself with physical culture.

What is his physical culture?

Ask the average person what is a spiral and he will

immediately make spiral gestures with his forefinger. Too often, if you ask the uninformed man what is physical culture, he will put his hands against his shoulders, and then thrust out his arms in a mock dumb-bell drill.

Physical culture, as it has been developed and evangelized and propagated by Macfadden for more than forty years, is much more than such physical exercises. Primarily, it is an effort to establish an understanding of the body, so that it gets what it wants to heal itself and keep itself well. That means, of course, a certain amount of exercise; it means also a great deal more, including the right food to eat, and only enough of it to feed the body, not to fatten it, or to make it gross and diseased. The physical culturist never forgets that millions of people today are going to their graves prematurely through improper feeding. It means also a balance in living; the right amount of sleep and of fresh air and of sunshine.

Thus it is living a natural life as far as that is possible in a thoroughly unnatural civilization.

None of this can sound startling today. The public mind is thoroughly receptive to such ideas and responsive to such teaching. But when Macfadden started, forty years ago, the scene was different. People slept with the windows shut down tightly, against the dark menace of the "night air"! Eating and drinking were on an entirely different basis. If you were sick, you assuredly took medicine. Perhaps you took two or

in his bed-chamber. Everybody wants to eat food that will agree with him. Pick up any newspaper today and you will find in it drawings and directions for simple exercises, you will find advice on sensible eating, and how to live to be a hundred years old. It is all very different from the time—it does not seem ages ago—when a young wrestler named Macfadden bombarded the editors with just such manuscripts and was told there was no public interest in health matters. The public interest in it had to be awakened, and more than any other man, Macfadden brought about that awakening. To do it, he had to start his own magazine, for no editor would print what he had to say—and that is one of the most significant phases of the history of his publications.

What was the secret of the man's flaming enthusiasm for his subject? The answer is simple enough. He was saved by it himself. By his bootstraps he lifted himself out of a grave dug for him by his father and his mother. It gave him what the psychoanalysts have sometimes called a world-saving complex. How much he has saved the world can be computed only when his life is studied with an unprejudiced mind.

Upon his mission he embarked with a spirit that is hard to understand, an enthusiasm almost beyond calculation. I have never known any other man with the fierce enthusiasm for any idea that Macfadden has for physical culture. He stopped at nothing. With only a farm school education to begin with, he had to

One of the most striking photographs of Macfadden ever taken, showing him at the age of twenty-one, ready to launch his amazing career.

Photograph of Bernarr Macfadden when about thirty years of age.

teach himself. Yet to such good purpose did he apply himself in public libraries, and in schools where he coached the teams, that he informed himself fully upon the subjects that he most wished to know. He learned things that the world was passing by. When he proclaimed sun-baths they laughed at him. When he proclaimed the healing virtues of water they laughed at him. Yet today, some scientists speak with respect of Father Kneipp, the German pioneer in hydrotherapy. While other specialists talk of their heliotherapy, and the marvelous cures that can be wrought by the invisible rays of the sun, Macfadden was preaching sun-healing and water-healing before some of these specialists were born.

There is something here that is baffling about Macfadden; some instinctive prompting in him that leads him to a truth which he may not fully understand, while others get nowhere at all. Repeatedly the same phenomenon will occur in his own office. He will get an idea and it will meet prompt objection from all his associates. He will listen attentively, but he has learned from bitter experience not to listen too trustingly. More often than not, he will carry out his plans in spite of their objections, and again, more often than not, the end justifies his confidence in himself. When it does, his associates put it down to "Macfadden luck" which is a by-word in his office. But that is far from the truth. It is an instinctive prompting that leads the man. He is like someone in a dark room, someone

who reaches out and touches something. Perhaps he does not know what it is he has found, but it is something, and Macfadden is the man to hold on to it. The others grope around blindly and find nothing at all—and they try to tell him there is nothing there.

That, I think, explains how so many times Macfadden has been right and the medical profession has been wrong. With a Jesuitical cunning, the austere company of medical men always contrive to make the world believe they were the ones to discover the truth before anyone else. No one need blame them for that, for they are human beings, with the same failings as other human beings; they die like everybody else, in spite of their materia medica, their knowledge of bacteriology, of pathology, of physiology, and the other essentials to a sound medical education, the names of which they hurl at Macfadden as a reproach.

These doctors have fought him throughout his career. They fought him first with indifference. They considered his ideas on fasting nonsensical and refused to give them a dignified hearing. Not until university professors, a quarter of a century later, stumbled upon the same truth, did they pay any attention, and then they said that doctors knew about it all along. The same thing occurred with many other physical culture ideas, including weight increase and reduction, and the cure of tuberculosis.

Later I shall present these theories, just as Macfadden has developed them, but for the moment I am

interested in giving a general portrait of a personality.

It was this personality that the medical profession treated with indifference. But only for a few years. The man had a tongue in his head, and at his right hand was pen and ink, at his left a printing press and in his pocket money enough to pay for printing his magazine. People were listening. They were being led away from nostrums that tasted like poison gas was to taste, years later, on the battlefields of Flanders. They pushed back the pills and powders; they rubbed their thumbs skeptically up and down the gleaming knives of the operating room and then drew back with a new doubt in their eyes.

Macfadden could no longer be treated with indifference. The man was dangerous. Because of him, the doctors were beginning to lose patients.

There is no question that much of the antagonism of the medical profession to Macfadden was sincere. But sincerity is often as much a curse as a blessing. All the armies in the World War were sincere. The German clergymen prayed just as sincerely for the victory of the Kaiser's troops as our clergymen prayed for their defeat. There is no one more sincere than the reformer, who would wrap up the whole world in a bag of blue laws and go back to the days of witch-burning. Sincerity can be wrong as well as right.

Moreover, there can be no question that Macfadden was himself grievously wrong in many an instance. Life taught him that. Life taught him that the medi-

cal profession which he lambasted with such bouyant gusto had in it many great and fine men, as anxious for the truth as he himself, and yet absolutely convinced that he was wrong.

With such men Macfadden learned at last not to quarrel. He came to understand that men can honestly differ in their views, and this lesson in tolerance was brought home to him in so many ways that later he was to become a stern advocate of tolerance in a time that was drifting back into an intolerance which exalted lynchings, whipped white women in the dark, and condemned men to prison cells for the honest expression of their views.

Certainly Macfadden suffered himself sufficiently from intolerance to learn its most informing lessons. One of the great physical horrors of the present day is venereal disease. Macfadden saw it in all its malignancy in the wrecks of men who came to the gymnasiums, seeking to regain the health they had lost. He saw, too, that ignorance had brought most of them to their dreadful plight. He saw that silence in the face of such an evil was a crime, and as soon as he had the opportunity he began to strike at that evil boldly.

With what result?

That intolerance nearly crushed him. That for this fight for frankness in sex education he found himself on the very threshold of prison. Again he was ahead of his time. Today the Health Department of the United States government circulates information re-

garding sex infinitely more unreserved than anything Macfadden had dared to print. And had it not been for his audacity and fortitude then, the public might not have been ready to read and benefit by such literature.

But that was a part of the lone game he was playing. The enthusiasm which rode him, and made itself his master, was not to be out-faced by intolerance. He was ready for anything that would advance his cause. When the doctors would not listen to him, he tried thousands of experiments on his own body. What kind of experiments? As one instance, he fasted two weeks. Again, he fed himself for three weeks on less than six cents a day. He exposed his muscles and organs and digestive system to every promising treatment he found. And he still continues to do it. Only a few weeks ago I found, on a visit to his home, that he was sleeping on the floor every night. I asked him why.

He explained that he believed human beings made a mistake in lying down in soft beds; that it was better for the delicate construction of the spinal column that a man sleep on an unyielding surface. I do not say his idea was right. It may be right and it may be wrong. Certainly it did not convert me from my comfortable mattress. But Macfadden earnestly assured me that it had helped him and he meant to continue the practice permanently. I mention it here only

to indicate the experimental nature that is his, and that the years have failed to discourage.

This is Macfadden, the physical culturist, the man who stepped out of a small arena to enter a large one, and who became the Macfadden the world knows today. This is the real Macfadden. In this is the uniqueness of the man. To know him as he is, one must perceive in him the unquenchable passion for health both for himself and his fellow-man. So close is this health to his spirit that he cannot understand the indifference of many people to its importance. Why do they smoke cigarettes? He would not take their cigarettes away from them by a constitutional amendment. He doesn't believe in reform by legislation. But why do they smoke cigarettes, when they must know the injury they are doing to their own bodies? He cannot understand that.

Macfadden was an arch-enemy of liquor. He was one of the first men to point out to the public the physical damage done by strong drink; the havoc wrought to kidneys and stomach by its use. Most opposition to it had been based on moral grounds until he began to preach that whiskey and wines and beer poisoned the bodily organs. Yet he is more opposed to prohibition than to liquor. He knew that was not the way to effect a reform. But still he cannot understand why they drink and why they smoke, when the danger of narcotics is so clear. Why do they do it

when they must know how harmful it is? He cannot fathom such idiocy.

Once I quoted to him the lines of Edna St. Vincent Millay:

> "My candle burns at both its ends
> It will not last the night,
> But ah my foes, and oh, my friends
> It gives a lovely light!"

That quatrain didn't please Bernarr Macfadden. The idea of eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die is beyond his power to condone. The fact that certain temperaments might consider the Spartan rigors of physical culture too great a price to pay for longevity; that they would rather live a gayer, if a shorter life, appeals to him only as a piece of congenital nonsense, nothing more.

Life itself is precious to Macfadden. What his ideas are on a future existence I have never asked, but I do know that he believes the present is here to be used; that full advantage should be taken of it; that one of the greatest possible quests for mankind is the search for the fountain of youth. And whereas Ponce de Leon sought it in the fountains of Florida, Macfadden has looked for it in the streaming blood of man.

Upon that quest he is still engaged, with the same joy and confidence as when he began almost half a century ago. His huge business interests are merely a means to an end; to advance the search; to bring

humanity nearer to a goal of perhaps unattainable perfection. For Macfadden, in his own way, is seeking the perfect thing.

After all these years he has discarded many ideas that once seemed vital to him. To others he has held on unflinchingly, and in the light of vast experience he believes in their practicality more firmly than ever before. Why should man die so young? More than one sage has pondered that great problem. Goethe, through the bearded lips of Faust, demanded it of the earth, the stars and the sea. At last he put it to Satan himself, and Satan himself had no answer. In our own time, George Bernard Shaw, one of Macfadden's early contributors to *Physical Culture Magazine,* asked it once more. He wrote a series of five plays, which he called a metabiological pentateuch under the name of "Back to Methuselah." The idea was that in the future, man might live almost as long as he pleased. With Shaw it was only a whim. With Macfadden it is something more. It is a wish that he believes he can make practical. His theories on longevity, now receiving some confirmation from certain scientists, are fascinating, and I shall describe them in subsequent chapters.

This is the physical culture Macfadden, the man who has fasted, who has bathed in the sun and in the sea, who has cooked foods in new ways, and eaten food without cooking, who has carried bags of sand upon his back in long hikes, who has tried out upon

his bones and flesh and blood and vital organs everything that might lead to more light upon the baffling mystery of health and illness, of death and of the hidden springs of youth.

But that is only one phase of the man.

It is conceivable, as my friend admitted in the Berlin Winter Garden, that an athlete might do all these things. Macfadden has done them, so it must be conceivable. It is also credible that a man with such an enthusiastic message could successfully build a magazine for its dissemination. In that way he could be considered a successful editor and publisher.

But Macfadden has done more than that.

With such a record behind him, and while continuing that life-work at full tilt, he nevertheless stepped into an entirely different field and there made the most astonishing success of modern times.

That is to say, he became editor and publisher of the world's most extraordinary magazine.

True Story Magazine has the greatest newsstand sale of any monthly in the world. It has nothing whatever to do with physical culture, except by remote implication. In the publication field it is recognized as the first new magazine idea in a decade. Whatever may be its virtues and its faults—and we shall reserve that discussion until its proper chapter—*True Story Magazine* represents the mind and the purpose of Macfadden. He is its editor, in fact as well as in name.

This is what I meant when I referred to the miracu-

books. He had never planned to be rich, nor had the possibility greatly entered into his calculations.

Then *True Story* magazine began to earn millions of dollars. He was a rich man in spite of himself; a rich man, a little bewildered for the moment; a rich man to whom riches meant very little, except another source of power in the spread of an idea.

It was a curious experience. A psychologist might well ask what these riches would do to Bernarr Macfadden. Would wealth rob him of that fearful and child-like simplicity almost incredible in a man of his experience? No one who knew him well could ever predict such a thing. That he would persevere down his chosen road, that he would try new things, was as certain as that he would continue to diet and fast, though he lived in the house of Lucullus himself.

He did try new things, as one magazine venture after another was started. He branched into new fields, until at last he took a step of really spectacular importance; a step that brought him to the third of the three phases to which I have already alluded.

Macfadden became a newspaper publisher.

I shall have a great deal to say in these pages about the *New York Evening Graphic.* There is a great deal to be said, for from the very beginning its career was stormy, and tumultuous, and again bafflingly popular. In less than two years it had climbed to the third largest evening circulation in the United States, for a while selling more papers every day than the

New York Times and the *New York Sun* and some of the other respectable Tory sheets of New York politics.

It was the *New York Evening Graphic* that made the tabloid an issue in American newspaperdom. Not until it came into the field did the high-brow reviews debate weightily what ought to be done about tabloids. There were two of them in New York before Macfadden started his paper; there were many others, all over the country.

But it was the *Graphic* that started the discussion which is less important today. I cannot permit myself to say anything of that singular battle of the old-time journalism with the new tabloidism here, for I would be tempted out of a direct path, and I must reserve its discussion until its proper chapter.

With the *Graphic,* Macfadden became a journalist, a newspaper publisher, with his interests touching the commercial and political life of the country; his contacts bringing him into high places and confronting him with serious problems. It was a long way from the wrestling championship of the world. It was a long way for a strong man to have traveled.

Yet there he was, and there he remains. There he is today, with three daily newspapers in New York City—you will learn of the others later on—and others in Philadelphia, Detroit and elsewhere, perhaps more to be added. On this point he has remained consistently silent; not even his closest friends know

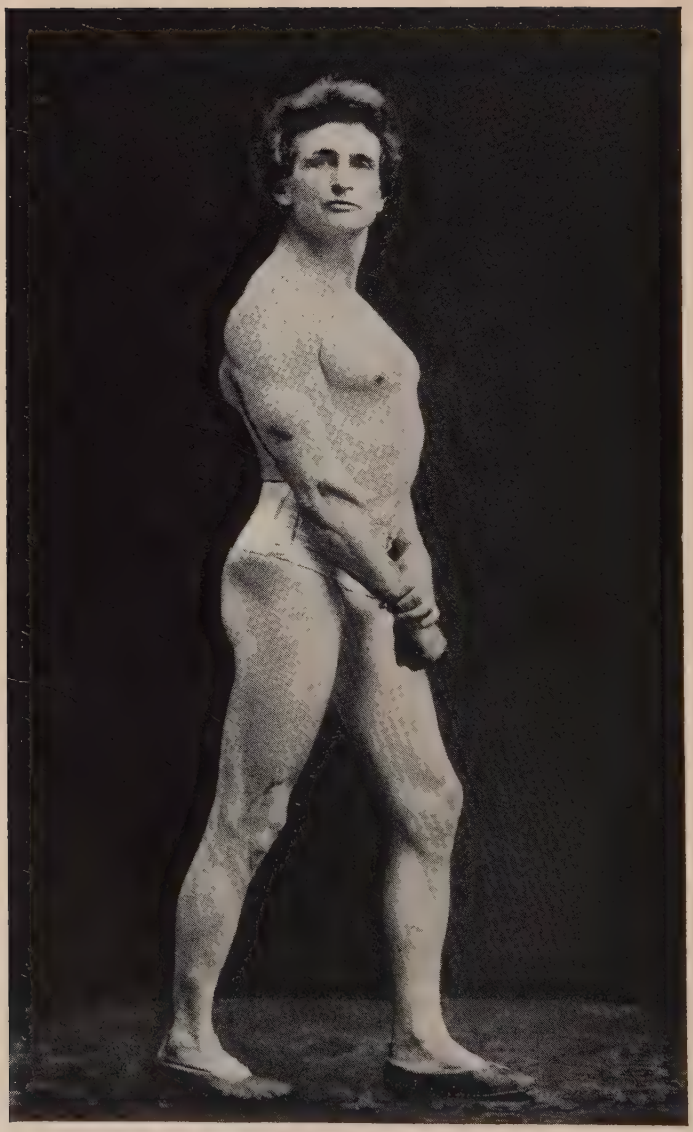
whether he wants to buy or establish any more newspapers, but I venture the prediction that before he is through, he will have his own chain of dailies from one ocean to the other.

That, however, is not so important. It is the man himself who is important. He has succeeded, in spite of the most overwhelming obstacles. Today he must be reckoned with, because he has his audience. The man on the soapbox may be eloquent, but he can do very little harm or good. You may not agree with his contentions, but you do not worry about him. If you do not agree with Macfadden, he is somebody to worry about because he can talk to millions of people, and you, very probably, can do nothing of the kind.

What manner of man is he, then, this Macfadden who has the attention of millions of people?

To meet Bernarr Macfadden, whether you like the man or not, is an experience. He is such a disappointment to all your prejudices. He is so unexpectedly simple and direct, and so anxious to be friendly. Later on, I shall have to tell of the amazing dialogue that passed one day in the office of *Physical Culture Magazine,* between Anthony Comstock and Bernarr Macfadden. I have often wondered what old Comstock's feelings must have been when he came at last, face to face, with the man whom he had so bitterly attacked. His vivid imagination must have pictured the physical culturist as a domineering, strident, berserk giant ready to pitch him out of the window. At least, the re-

A photograph of Mr. Macfadden at about the age of forty-five, his physical vigor undiminished, his enterprise, ambition and mental energy increasing.



A photograph of Mr. Macfadden at about the time he started the New York *Evening Graphic*. A characteristic pose.

former must have had some fear of physical violence for he brought along with him two huskies who had promised to protect him against the terrible man he wanted to talk to.

Instead he found a man of mild and gentle address, whose eyes twinkled even in the presence of Reform, and whose smile was not forced, as so many smiles directed at Anthony Comstock must have been forced until the old fellow's back was turned.

That was the Macfadden of many years ago. To-day he is sixty years old. The youthfulness of his body is the best testimonial to the creed he has preached, and by which he has most faithfully and conscientiously abided. His face is a fascinating study in character. You have but to look at the man to know that he has read life in the original text. He knows life as it is, for he has witnessed and experienced it at first hand. There is something in him of the wisdom of the old Indian chief. On his head is a crown of profuse hair, grown there after baldness had begun to overtake him; grown there by his own methods and theories and triumphant in the justification of those methods and theories, a physical culture head of hair, if you please; and a tremendous one. His eyes look at you steadily; he will match his eyes against yours in reading distant street signs and he is likely to win, for he *exercises* his eyes, which is another curious matter of which I shall tell you later.

His strength and vitality today would seem to be

beyond the reach of the average man, yet Macfadden will take your hand and look you in the eyes and tell you how he was a weakling, with an inherited cough, and over desperate obstacles he won for himself this unceasing vigor and good health. He will tell you that "electric aliveness" is the lawful birthright of every man and woman; you need only take his advice and he is ready to guarantee that you can take possession of that birthright.

I have said that at sixty Macfadden is his own best testimonial. Let me explain what I mean by that by citing one day out of his sixtieth year. It is not an altogether typical day, but it happened at least once a week, and in summer, two or three times a week.

At his home then in Nyack, New York, he rises from his bed on the floor at four o'clock in the morning, just at the time when the jazz bands in countless New York and suburban ballrooms are playing the "Home, Sweet Home" waltz.

Macfadden eats no breakfast this morning. For one thing, he is on a fast, and for another he intends to take a long walk. In fact, he intends to walk down to the office.

That may not sound very impressive, unless you are familiar with the geography of New York and its environs. Nyack is twenty-seven miles from the office of the Macfadden Publications. Now twenty-seven miles is a long walk for a horse, much less a human

being, but Macfadden intends to walk twenty of these miles and without any breakfast at that.

What good would a man be to himself, for the rest of the day, after such a feat? The question sounds sensible enough, unless you happen to be a physical culturist. Then you would know, without being told, that such a saunter as that would put a man in splendid fighting trim for the day's activities. The simple fact of the matter is that by noon Macfadden has reached New York, has bathed and changed, and is there sitting at his desk, smiling, in prime condition, ready for any of the hundred problems his executives will undoubtedly bring to him within the next six hours.

When *does* he eat? Everybody asks that.

Once a day is about all, and the time when he takes that meal depends entirely upon his hunger. Long ago Macfadden eliminated what he calls "habit hunger," which is the muscle habits of the stomach. Once get over that, and he maintains you will be led by your own feelings to know when to eat and how much. In spite of the fact that he walked those twenty miles, Macfadden will be content with that one meal for the day, and he will be there at his desk, reading debatable manuscripts, checking up on circulation reports, looking over vouchers, and advertising contracts, or dictating his editorials, hours after the regiments of his employes have gone to their homes.

If he has no speaking engagements in the city, he will then drive back to Nyack, and perhaps take his

wife and family down to the local movie theater. By ten o'clock he is sound asleep.

He has learned the secret of doing one thing after another, promptly, regularly and with dispatch. You talk to him about one matter; he passes on it, and you leave his office. You leave him bending over his desk, scanning the papers there, until the next visitor arrives. That is his scheme and he sticks to it. I have never seen Macfadden idle. He shifts uncomfortably in general, casual conversation. He is restless, on edge, anxious to be doing something until the conversation turns on some topic that seems to him important. Then he is all attention, anxious to hear different views of the problem. In his own mind he is sketching an editorial based on the topic, and most likely he will speak it into the dictaphone before he goes to bed.

Perhaps that is one of Macfadden's greatest deficiencies—his inability to loaf. I think that laziness, once in a while, is a good thing for a man. It rejoiceth his soul and is good for his gizzard. I cannot imagine Macfadden loafing. His temperament would forbid it. If his body were not active, his mind would be. In the summer he often remains at Nyack a day or so each week, in lieu of taking a vacation. But he works as hard there as he could anywhere else. He is likely to play tennis all day long, stopping only to swim in the concrete pool, or to work in his own private vegetable garden.

Such an unresting temperament finds it hard to

sympathize with the frailties of human nature. But if he does not sympathize with the tendency to drift in a golden *dolce far niente,* he can at least forgive it and try to show it the error of such ways. But just try to show him the error of *his* ways! Try to convince him that he has been overworking, and that a real vacation, a complete change of scene, would do him a world of good. Mrs. Macfadden has told him that. So have his closest friends and associates.

He would listen with a genuine display of interest, and you might fancy that he was ready to agree that a long ocean voyage would be beneficial to him. Then he would say:

"I think a good long hike would do me good—say a walk from here to Chicago. We could go by way of Pittsburgh, over the mountains."

If he were to take a vacation, that is the sort of a rest he would want. But not in four years has he taken a rest of any kind. Except for a month or so during the summer, when he remains for a day or two each week in Nyack, he is at work from early in the morning until late at night. He feels most keenly a sense of responsibility, to his readers and to his stockholders, and he has stuck to his job, in one crisis and out of another, bearing the major brunt of his business on his own shoulders.

He does it because he loves it. In this work that he has built up he takes the pride of a father. It is his meat and his strong drink, and to drag him away from

it is practically impossible. It is his diversion as well as his work. Macfadden is not seen in the New York theaters more than two or three times a year and then, generally, it is because of some special interest. He takes his children to the movies and he plays with those children with as much zest as they play. He plays athletic games with them, and chess and checkers, and he sits at the piano with them and sings while the logs blaze behind the two bronze owls at his fireplace. These are his diversions, and from them he has never sought a change or a vacation.

This is a different picture of Macfadden from what has been painted by many of his foes. It is an honest picture, made by one who has dwelt in his household and who has known him well. In this preliminary sketch of him, I have tried only to give glimpses into his character. His views of life are liberal and tolerant; he has unswervingly preached the simple and homely virtues.

Why, then, is it that he has aroused such opposition? Who are his foes and why have they fought him so bitterly and so consistently, for so many long years? There must be a good reason for such animosity, unrelenting, giving no quarter, powerful.

What is the secret of such hostility?

As there are three phases of Macfadden's career which have greatly affected the public, so there are three phases of this antagonism. A weak man never makes powerful enemies. Macfadden began as a

strong man, and he has been growing stronger every year. If we look into his activities, it is easy to understand why he has raised enemies, terrible as armies with banners, against him.

Look at him first as a physical culturist. Such a career made him the natural enemy of the doctor. Human nature is human nature, and if everybody got well and stayed well, there would be no use for doctors. Macfadden's job was to tell you how to get well without a doctor, and then, how to live so that you would never need a doctor again. If you were a doctor, you wouldn't like that. It is all very well to imagine a benevolent profession of therapeutics that would seek to eliminate the causes of disease, and to use its influence altogether on the side of prevention. God be praised, that is what the medical profession is coming to now, and many of his friends believe that Macfadden helped to bring about that reform.

Nevertheless, the fact does remain that if everybody were well and strong, the doctors would all starve to death, unless they did something else for a living. Small wonder, then, they didn't like this young man from Missouri, who came forth with the radical idea that Mother Nature was the only true physician, and that, given a chance, the body would heal itself. I have said already that these antagonistic physicians were probably sincere, many of them. But sincerity is, of itself, an enigma. Self-interest is concealed at the bottom of so much sincerity. The wish is so often

father to the thought. The doctors subconsciously wished that Macfadden were only a quack, and then, perhaps, they convinced themselves that he was. How could he be otherwise? Had he a diploma from a recognized medical college? He had not! Had he studied under competent professors, learning pathology, and bacteriology, and physiology as they should be learned? He had not! Yet did this man try to tell people what to do for themselves when they were sick? He did! Then he must be a fanatic or a charlatan, and probably both; the doctors were sure of it; he was a dangerous man who ought to be put out of the doctors' way just as quickly as possible.

Here was a snobbery that has been the curse of the medical profession since the days of Harvey and Pasteur. On the face of their own *a priori* reasoning, they condemned the man. What did the man matter, or his education? It was what Macfadden had discovered, or what he thought he had found out, that mattered—or that should have mattered to the doctors.

But the medical profession has never seen things that way. You yourself might conceivably discover tomorrow the one sovereign alkahest that would end cancer forever. If you did, you would soon find yourself out of luck. The medical profession would have none of you. They would pay absolutely no attention to you. If this sounds like an extreme statement, just discover a cure for anything and try to get the medical profession to investigate it. Their position seems to

be that unless a health discovery is made by a man with a medical diploma, it is not a health discovery at all, but the sham of a pretender, and they will not even dignify it with an examination.

That was the fundamental error in the attitude of the physicians toward Macfadden. If they had given him a hearing, if they had tried to examine the claims he made, his whole career might have been shaped differently. As things turned out, perhaps he has a great deal to thank them for.

But Macfadden had still another blow to deliver against the doctors which was to arouse their fiercest resentment. This was his fight against vaccination. While the doctors were urging vaccination against almost every imaginable ill, and injecting one serum after another into the veins of their trusting patients, and trying to pass laws to make the practice compulsory, Macfadden was thundering against the practice as savage, ruinous, criminal. He exhorted the public conscience to abolish compulsory vaccination, as it had already been abolished in England. And soon the doctors began to find that some of their docile patients were backing away from them, and refusing to be vaccinated.

To hear the physicians talk, one would think that in opposing vaccination, Macfadden was an absolute ignoramus. They know better, but they do not admit it to the public. They know that the opposition to inoculation is not confined to the physical culturist;

that many reputable thinkers take the same viewpoint. Who is right and who is wrong does not matter to us now. But in justice to Macfadden, the reader should know immediately that such opposition to vaccination is neither irresponsible nor ignorant, that the whole matter is still in debate, and that again Macfadden may be twenty years ahead of his time, in spite of all the authority of the medical profession.

They derided his revolutionary theories in the treatment of social diseases, but they declined to examine the cases he presented. If a man were cured of syphilis by such a method, then, declared the doctors, the patient had not had syphilis in the first place, even if so pronounced by regular physicians. This was easy enough to say, but it works both ways. Who was to say, then, that the patients they claim to cure of the same disease by drugs ever had it in the first place?

In due course the innermost facts of these matters will be told. They are by no means the most interesting or the most dramatic in Macfadden's long tussle with the medical profession. The story of Macfadden and the oculists is one of the most comical tales in the history of therapeutics and certainly the joke there is on the doctors. But this is not the place to tell it.

I think I have said enough to show some of the natural sources of antagonism to Macfadden, so far as his physical culture work is concerned. That the prudish mind should take offense at the undraped human body displayed in the pages of his magazine

was a foregone conclusion. It was equally to be expected that the charge of commercialism under the guise of an earnest purpose should be made against the publisher. But time has answered those charges. To-day *Physical Culture Magazine* is as above reproach as the wife of Julius Cæsar. Not that the magazine has changed its policy or retreated from its purpose. It is merely that the public mind has been accustomed to much more severe shocks than ever Macfadden gave them. In many respectable Sunday newspapers, the rotogravure sections have much more shocking pictures. Meanwhile, Macfadden has hewn steadily to his own line. Here, at least, the whirligig of time has brought in its revenge, for the very papers that long ago attacked him for shameless pictures now publish far franker disclosures of the human form divine, and think nothing of it.

Again, when he brought out a magazine with the announced intention of teaching the lessons of life in plain words, it was natural that prudish minds would cry stop, and that his motives would be impugned. But Macfadden had learned more than one lesson from his previous dealings with such people. He sprang upon them a surprise that has never before been equaled in publishing circles; a surprise that set the late Reverend J. Frank Case, of the famous Watch and Ward Society of Boston, gasping with astonishment; a surprise that need not be described until I come to the chapter that deals with the history of *True Story Magazine.*

Such antagonisms had to be expected. Some of them had to be conciliated. Others had to be defeated. With others, neither the one nor the other was possible. The fight goes on, and sometimes I wonder that Macfadden does not lose heart. But he seems to expect it; certainly he does not complain. Perhaps on those long and often solitary walks up the Palisades that lord it over the Hudson he builds a philosophy that keeps him content.

Macfadden could greatly advance his cause if he could make his peace with the doctors, and with other elements who try to block him. But these very same elements could also greatly prosper, could mightily advance their own interests, by meeting him halfway. I know from having seen both sides of the fence that a great deal of the antagonism is due to misunderstanding.

As to the part that business rivalry and literary snobbery have played, I shall have considerable to disclose before all my story is set down.

By this time all these antagonists should realize that the man cannot be eliminated. He is here to stay, he is firmly entrenched, he is gaining in public support all the time. Millions take him seriously here in the United States; therefore the others must take him seriously, for he has a social importance which cannot be under-estimated.

People continually ask of Bernarr Macfadden's friends:

"Is he really sincere?"

"Is he just a charlatan?"

"Has he real ability, or has he just been lucky?"

"Is there anything to this Physical Culture stuff?"

"The stories in *True Story Magazine* are not really true, are they? Don't hack fiction writers turn them out by the yard?"

I do not intend to answer any of these questions. I intend merely to tell a simple and forthright story of the man as I have found him, of his career and of the work he has done, and let that supply the answer. You shall judge for yourself whether it is good or bad. The record is here, and you can form your own opinion.

CHAPTER II

Why Macfadden Became an Athlete

Macfadden's career was built on strictly American lines. That is to say, he was born poor and made his own place in the world. There was, moreover, a distinct significance in his birth, because his only bequest from his parents was what was then popularly known as a delicate constitution. Perhaps they gave him, too, his imagination, his capacity to dream great dreams. But I doubt that. If there is anything in heredity, Macfadden's rich endowment of spinning visions of the future, which is a part of the man's birthright, must have come from some old, forgotten and highly imaginative ancestor.

Certainly there was little of day dreaming, little upon which to nourish ambition, or even to call it into being, in his early surroundings. The farmhouse where he first drew his breath was near Mill Springs, Missouri; he was the first of three children and the only boy. The farm was about two miles from the village, on the Black River.

Almost from the time when he can first remember, Macfadden was tasting some of the bitterness and sorrow of life. That farmhouse was not a happy place. The country was wild and sparsely settled; comforts

John R. Macfadden, Bernarr Macfadden's father.

The birthplace of Bernarr Macfadden at Mills Springs, Missouri.

were few; the family was poor, the farm did not amount to very much, there were only two rooms in the house, and the elder Macfadden was too fond of horse racing and corn whiskey. When in his cups, his wife would have to fly from the raging devil that seemed to take possession of him; fly with her three children to the home of a neighbor. And that is one of the first of these childhood recollections.

When Macfadden was four years old, his father died of delirium tremens.

He remembers that!

And more than that he remembers. His mother's struggles to keep her brood of three together were brave and hard and losing. For a while they were with her parents; then they were in Chicago, and then, finally, Macfadden was sent to a very cheap and very bad boarding school.

It was a sad experience; to begin the lonely life which he was to know for so long, in such a school and under such circumstances. From the first the boy had seemed to be a weakling. Not one of the ailments which children in those days were supposed to "take" had passed him by. Moreover, he had a vicious aftermath from a vaccination. In those days the technique of vaccination was accomplished from arm to arm. In Macfadden's case blood-poisoning followed, and he was deathly ill.

Right after that blood-poisoning, he had been torn, screaming and clawing and kicking in a frantic agony

of fear, from the arms of his mother. Alone he was sent to this school, that was as infamous as any which Dickens described in his novels. Actually, it was the sort of boarding school where the boys ate peanuts, shells and all. When Macfadden was finally taken away again by his mother, he remembers only the first meal that he ate at home, and not the joy of reunion.

But this was only a brief reunion. His mother could not support him; she did the best she could, and sent him to a family of relatives who ran a hotel, not far from Chicago. Those relatives promptly put the child to work; before he could spell, he emptied the slops from hotel rooms; before he could count, he blacked the shoes, he ran the errands, and scrubbed the floors. Only once in a while did he go to school.

When he did have any spare time, he spent it sitting at a window, watching down the village street in a constant fever of hope that his mother would come and take him home. But she never came. One day his relatives, his aunt and his uncle, as they were called, beckoned him aside and explained to him that his mother was dead.

Late into that night the orphan boy lay awake in his bed. In another room he could hear the hotel proprietor talking to his wife. They were talking about Macfadden's mother. They said she had died of "consumption." That was in the days before hotel proprietors and their wives knew there was such a word as tuberculosis. They whispered to each other that the

little boy who lay in the next room, and who, unknown to them, was listening to all they had to say, would soon die of the same disease.

It was a sentence of death, and as such was accepted by the listening boy. He pulled the sheets over his head and cried for his mother. In the morning, it all seemed like a dream; he asked his uncle if it were true that he, too, would die soon, like his mother. The uncle laughed and told him he had had a nightmare.

For two years Macfadden drudged for those people, until at last they decided to give up the hotel business, and, at the same time, to get rid of him. That was when he was adopted by a young farmer named Hunter and his wife.

Being a bound boy on a farm is a great deal harder than being the boy of all work in a hotel, as Macfadden learned in a very short time. But it was a blessing in disguise. It was hard physical work, out of doors, and that was what he needed. The farmer and his wife were decent enough to him, and he liked feeding their hundred hogs, and their horses, and throwing down the hay with a pitchfork, gleaming in the morning sun. Macfadden was a small child to be doing such work, but he did that, and much more; he churned butter, and he scrubbed the floors, and he helped with the baby; he gathered the sap from the sugar maples, and he had a dog all his own.

True, the dog died, and Macfadden has never wanted another. But he felt very important at being

permitted to do such grown-up tasks; he worked with a hoe and a rake in the garden, just as he does today in his vegetable patch at home. He turned the grindstone to sharpen the axes and scythes; more and more duties were turned over to him by the farmer and his wife, with every week that passed.

I cannot conceive of any father or mother who would wish such a lot upon their own child. It was not a joyous life for an eleven-year-old boy. But there he was, an orphan, facing the age-old struggle for existence, and profiting by the experience. Naturally, they sent him to the district school, to which he had to walk several miles. There the teacher made him sit beside her desk, because he was unruly among the other pupils. That same winter he drank hard cider and tried to smoke a cigar. Since that time, Macfadden has not tasted strong liquor, or used tobacco. He had had enough. And many teachers have tried to make him go a proscribed path, without success.

At the end of a long, hard year a great transformation had taken place in the white-faced, spindling hotel boy that the farmer Hunter had adopted. At twelve Macfadden was sturdy; ruddy and strong, doing a man's work and getting out of it nothing but his food and his bed. He was an expert farm-hand now, driving his team of horses and taking his place in the fields beside grown laborers. He butchered the hogs with the best of them. And in the autumn he cut

down trees and chopped at the wood pile with all the fervor of the exiled Hohenzollern Kaiser at Doorn, who, at that time, had not yet ascended his fateful throne.

Why was it, then, that Macfadden did not grow up to be a farmer, and nothing more?

Perhaps it was because he learned to read. The district school did that much for him. He found a story book, by some odd chance, in the farmhouse, where story books were the last things ever thought of. And out of the pages of the story book came trooping a cavalcade of romantic characters, into the boy's heart, as they did to David Copperfield in the attic, "a glorious host to keep him company."

He was strong now; strong enough to lick the school bully, and he did it gratefully, but there was nevertheless in him an unrest and a dissatisfaction that would not let him be. He was no longer contented with the farm, and his relations with the Hunters were no longer so agreeable.

One day he was refused a new pair of shoes. This was after a loafer in front of the village store had laughed at the shoes he had on his feet. That was enough. That was more than enough, it was too much. Somewhere in his story books the boy had found a sense of pride and of self-respect and the capacity for indignation.

He was not big enough to fight his guardian, but he faced the farmer's wife and told her he was going

away. And he did go away. He left with no money in his pocket, and only his ragged clothing on his back; left a bed and his board, departing with nothing in his hands, a boy of twelve years, starting alone down the long road of life.

The farmer was sure he would come back, but he never saw that orphan boy again. That was how Bernarr Macfadden began to make his own way in the world.

For many years after that, his life is like a jig-saw puzzle, to which there was no original plan or pattern, or ambition. If it seems aimless, it also discloses the sources from which sprang many of the surprises which Macfadden was to deliver, when his ambition was awakened, and when he began to make something of himself.

That hour was far-distant, when the boy left the farmhouse and walked down the country lane out into the world. Where was he going? He knew. He had a definite end in view. He knew about some relatives who lived in a town about twenty miles distant. He boarded a train, appealed to the conductor and won his sympathy, and landed safely at his destination, without spending a cent.

They received him, we may suppose, somewhat dubiously. But when they found that Robert Hunter did not wish to make trouble about him, these relatives were more amiably disposed, and took care of him

until a home was found for him with his uncle in St. Louis, where his grandmother and sister also lived.

For the next few years his life was one change after another. He ran errands for a mercantile agency, and won several promotions there; he was an office boy in a wholesale grocery firm where his uncle worked; he got into difficulties by playing pranks; he was guyed by the city clerks who knew he was a farm boy and took advantage of him; he worked hard every day, and read novels far into the night, and finally he developed a hacking cough, and he heard his uncle whisper to his aunt the word "consumption."

The memory of that earlier childhood experience, that nightmare, returned like a chill upon his mind. This was a moment of the most profound importance to Bernarr Macfadden. On the farm he had found that vital, buoyant health which he has since tried to give to his fellow-man throughout the most significant part of his career. Now he was losing that health; losing it far more quickly than he had gained it on the farm. His color gone from his face, his weight gone from his bones, his strength passing from him, his spirit dwindling too.

For the first time Macfadden knew despair. He sensed the fact that all the people around him had pronounced a sentence upon him; a sentence of death. This was not a nightmare. This was a reality. They thought he was an ingenital consumptive. They didn't think he would ever grow up to be a man.

That is a hard thought for an orphan. In his bed at night, Macfadden could not sleep for thinking about it. What could he do? Had he not read marvelous tales in the newspapers of what tonics and medicines had done for others? Why would they not do as much for him? Perhaps he was not doomed after all. Perhaps there was a chance for him—in patent medicines.

He tried to drink these patent medicines, and he also had filled the prescriptions which the doctors gave him. But he could not swallow the doses. The taste gagged him. That taste has never quite left his mouth. To this day it sickens him; he gags at it when he is thundering to audiences the virtues of natural methods and the uselessness of poisonous drugs.

In his imagination, those days, Macfadden was already in his grave.

"Though I have passed through many bitter experiences in the course of my life," he once wrote in his magazine, "this period was by far the most harrowing. But all my sufferings served to impress upon my mind a lesson that I was never to forget, and that is the importance of health, the most precious asset that any man or woman can possess."

There his message was born. There it was, though he did not know it, that he became filled with that intense zeal to wake up the people around him to the need for safeguarding their health while they still had it; to postpone their funeral; to live longer and more buoyantly.

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But Macfadden had a hard fight ahead of him before he had postponed his own funeral.

Here was a child of fifteen years old who decided not to die before his time.

It is an odd retrospection; the picture of the boy with a cough, lying alone and afraid in his room, biting his lip and deciding not to die. Odd, and significant too. If he had not had then that fierce love of life, of that life which he thought was being taken away from him, Macfadden's might have been a very different story.

The doctors had failed to help him. The patent medicines were worthless.

What was there left for a boy to do?

I do not know what you would have done, or what I would have done, but I do know what Macfadden did.

He decided to go to a gymnasium.

That sounds simple enough now, but it was not so simple then. It is because Macfadden has done his work so well, as much as anything else, that it does sound simple now. In those days, let me reiterate, people expected to buy health bottled and pilled, and in no other way. Gymnastic work was a kind of fad, not altogether respectable. Very few people even suspected that a man could regain his health by such practices. It was all associated in the public mind with prize fights and the historic "pink paper" called

the *Police Gazette.* It was not altogether "nice" and it was certainly not regarded seriously.

But Macfadden had a reasoning brain. He knew that when he went to the Hunter farm he had been very weak. He had worked hard on the farm. In the course of time he became strong. He loathed the idea of going back to a farm; he was a city boy now. How, then, could he do the hard physical work that would again restore his vitality?

At noon of the following day Bernarr Macfadden entered the door of a St. Louis gymnasium, housed in an abandoned church. For him it was a memorable occasion. Up in the gallery he sneaked and looked down upon a curious scene. The men below him were garbed in all sorts of curious attire, ranging from trousers and armless shirts to tights that covered the body from the waist down. The poorest physique among them shamed the wasted body of the watching boy; their spirited vitality dumbfounded him.

"I'm going to be like them. I'm going to look like them," he promised himself.

Not by the greatest frugality could he afford the gymnasium on his salary of six dollars a week. But the circular that was put into his hand as he left the place contained directions for a dumbbell drill.

He *could* afford dumbbells.

That night, in the seclusion of his room, his door locked against the certain ridicule of his relatives, he set to work in silent desperation. The next day every

part of his body ached. He did not care. He resumed his drill. A week later he believed he felt better, even though more than once his drill was stopped by the cough.

The improvement was not altogether a matter of his imagination. In two weeks he was perfectly sure of that. At the end of a month he bought heavier dumbbells. Even this was not enough. With some boys in the neighborhood, he fitted up a gymnasium in his uncle's cellar. They had a horizontal bar and two swinging trapezes, and having meanwhile witnessed Barnum's Greatest Show On Earth, Macfadden went into secret training to be a circus acrobat—an ambition which he cherished with boyish ardor for many a long day after that.

Within a short time, Macfadden had learned to do dangerous feats on the trapeze and horizontal bar, and he could also walk a tight-rope. Still, in his now insatiable thirst for exercise, for health, for life, he felt he was not getting enough exercise. This in spite of the fact that he did his dumbbell drills with religious regularity. He began to walk to work and back home again every day, a distance of six miles. When even this failed to satisfy his passion for that exercise which was to make him impregnably healthy, he took to carrying a bar of lead, weighing ten pounds, on all his walks.

If this sounds absurd—his grandmother promptly predicted he would wind up in the insane asylum—

consider why he did it. He was fighting, at an early age, the grimmest battle known to man; the battle with the pale specter of death. And he was giving the specter a good fight.

On top of all this, he bought a bicycle—one of those ancient affairs with a huge wheel in front and a funny little wheel in back, and a very high seat. How he lived through the falls he took while learning to ride that impossible contraption—which he bought second hand—is still a source of wonder to him, and to his children, when he tells them about it.

Unceasingly the boy continued his fight for health. In the gymnasium in the cellar, he and his companions boxed until eyes were black and noses were bloody; they wrestled with the crude ethics of the back lot; they swung Indian clubs and dumbbells and "chinned the bar"—and Macfadden was becoming hard as nails. He was almost an athlete; he had his strength back again—

But how long would it last?

That question bothered him, until finally he decided upon an immense sacrifice in order to solidify his victory and make his health permanently secure. Though the idea was most repugnant to him, he made up his mind to go back on the farm.

His uncle and especially his grandmother felt that he was growing to be a most erratic youth. But they did not interfere with his plan, and again Macfadden became a farm hand in the heart of Kansas. Here,

during a long summer, he worked hard at the dusty threshing machine, at pitching hay, at all the labor the yielding soil demands. On rainy days, he taught the other hands to box, though he knew little enough about it, then; he knocked out the tallest and the strongest; here, too, he received his first rude lessons in the intricate science of wrestling.

But Macfadden soon left all this and became a wanderer, taking his aimless way down the purple road that leads to nowhere. He did this for a reason not unlike the cause that once before called him from the farm. The pay of a farm-hand in those days was twenty dollars a month and board. But Macfadden was just a boy, and they paid him only ten dollars a month. He felt he was doing a man's work with the rest of them, and he wanted his twenty dollars. After three months, when they wouldn't pay him that, Macfadden quit and walked out of the gate into the road.

In a retrospective mood, Macfadden will sometimes recall with a quaint smile the days when he was a tramp. More than once, when work was scarce, he went on enforced fasts, but if they helped his health in those days, he was not aware of it. At night he slept in hay-ricks, in barns, under the open, friendly stars—anywhere. He learned the art of riding concealed under freight cars. Though he was often hungry, he did not ever find it necessary to beg.

"A boy's will is the wind's will and the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts," sang Longfellow.

What were Macfadden's youthful thoughts, as he tramped down the highways, then? Mostly of the glittering days to come, no doubt; days when he hoped he would be a circus acrobat in silk and spangles, whirling high in the air over the heads of thousands of delighted and applauding spectators.

For a while he remained with another of his distant relatives whom he had found on the course of his travels. This was a dentist who pulled hard but always got his tooth. Again Macfadden was a water-boy with a gang of construction laborers, building a new railroad. It was a rough life, among toughs and jail-birds and worse. Such an experience might well have been demoralizing. Macfadden did not abide with them long; the open road was calling again and he was off.

Once he was almost locked in a refrigerator car, a terrifying experience. He chopped wood for meals and slept under the sky. In one town, he paused long enough to open a boxing school. During this time, he wrote a letter to the dentist relative, and was amazed to receive a letter back inviting him to take a job as a printer's devil. The dentist was going to publish a newspaper.

That letter ended Macfadden's career as a tramp.

There was something about the idea of working on a newspaper strong enough to lure him off the road, beguiling and fascinating as he had found the wanderer's life to be. When he reads the modern auto-

biographies of intellectual vagabonds—there have been a number of such books in recent years—Macfadden understands them better than most men. There is an opiate lure to walking alone; perhaps it is some persistent remnant of that old love of the wayfarer in him that sends him forth on his long and lonely hikes, even today.

Macfadden took the job as a printer's devil, but it didn't last long. He wrote news items, set type, did everything that printer's devils do, and thus laid the authentic foundation for successful publishing, according to the requirements of American tradition. So many successful men began as printer's devils! Macfadden fills many requirements, as you can see, of the standard American success equipment!

When the newspaper failed, Macfadden went to work in the night-shift of a coal mine. He was now fifteen years old, and as he wiped the black sweat from his brow, he wondered, reasonably enough, what life was all about—and what it could possibly hold for him.

One may well ask the question here why he ever took such a job. He was trying to make his health secure against further set-backs. For that ambition he had already made material sacrifices. Why, then, did Macfadden join the night shift of a coal mine?

The answer is that his dentist uncle had made him stop and think; he had made the boy realize that self-respect comes only from earning one's way. He had talked to Macfadden—as no one had ever talked to

him before—about the danger of becoming a permanent tramp. That back-woods dentist saw that the open road had for his queer nephew a dangerous fascination. He talked Macfadden out of it.

It is a wonder that Macfadden listened. He had heard so little advice. So few people had taken the trouble to advise him. Already he was accustomed to governing his own plans, and doing very much as he pleased. That he should grow up to expound certain of the ideas he has expounded is quite curious, viewed from this distant perspective of his youth. The child who was born with the curse of a weak body grew up to preach the blessings of strength and health. The boy who had no home in manhood has preached incessantly the importance of the home and its training; for almost fifty years he has urged the sanctity of the family with a homely and direct sincerity. There are even stranger paradoxes in the man's career.

Macfadden was still as anxious about his health as ever; and as determined not to be lowered into a premature grave. But now there was a new element of self-respect apparent in his calculations. He would take any job he could get, rather than be a tramp. His relatives should not be ashamed of him.

So he went to work in the coal mine.

But he remained there only long enough to save money that would carry him back to St. Louis; a little matter of months passed before he boarded a train to return to his uncle.

Bernarr Macfadden, from a photograph made at the time relatives shook their heads and clucked their tongues, saying: "He can't live. He has consumption."

A rare and hitherto unpublished photograph of Macfadden taken when the romance of adventuring in the world had just begun. With him is shown his uncle, Crume K. Miller, proprietor of the general store in the background. Macfadden was his uncle's delivery boy at the time.

It was on this long return train ride that Macfadden came to a decision that was to change the entire course of his life.

What sort of reception would be waiting for him when he reached St. Louis? The question naturally tormented his mind, mile after mile on the seemingly endless journey. What would his sister think of him? What would his uncle say—and his grandmother? As he thought of these matters, he squirmed and shifted in his seat. He had the natural instinct of a boy to want to show his folks what he could do. All he had to show was good health; stronger muscles, better blood, abounding energy. And he realized a little bitterly that they would not regard his regained health as a very great accomplishment. Great as that task had seemed to him, they would pass it over, and look for other things.

In plain words, he asked himself, where was he going? And to this introspective *Quo Vadis* he had no answer. What did he intend to make of himself? He did not know. Would he float from one job to another, or go back to the farm, or what would he do?

He did not want to do any of those things. In most successful careers there comes that point of turning when a man asks himself the two questions: "Where am I going?" and "Where do I want to go?"

Macfadden realized that he was going to St. Louis, but beyond that he was apparently headed for nowhere

at all. As to where he *wanted* to go—that was a question he had never faced before.

The answer came spontaneously enough. The one interest the boy had had in his life was the capture of health. He had known very few companions. No one had stirred his interest in any special field of endeavor. In more sheltered lives, one boy will get a chemistry "set" for Christmas and because of that, decide to be a chemical engineer. Careers are often determined by toys. Macfadden never had any toys. The only occupation he knew was hard work; and he was only an unskilled laborer. He had a head on his shoulders, but he had had very little opportunity to use it, except to one fine purpose—to save himself from the clutches of the undertaker.

When, therefore, Macfadden asked himself that question—What did he wish to make of himself?—the spontaneous answer came to him that he wanted to be associated in some way with strength, with health and with the acquirement of health. If he had been a child in a sheltered home, surrounded by loving parents, as his own children are surrounded today, his impulse might have been very different. But he was a wandering orphan, alone on the train, and he had to find the answer for himself.

That he should decide, as he did decide, then and there, to devote himself to health education through gymnastics, seems to me to have in it something of the glorious courage of youth, full of fire and blind ambi-

tion. The more he thought of the plan, the more enthusiastic he became. No one was there to tell him how foolish was his idea. He tried to think it out practically. Well enough he realized his ignorance. He would have to learn before he could teach. He would have to join a gymnasium and obtain a complete gymnastic education. Then he would open his own gymnasium—and that gymnasium was the glittering star to which he hitched his train, that scorching afternoon.

"I will get a job," he told himself, "and work for a year or so, while I am studying at the gymnasium. Then——"

When he arrived at the old station in St. Louis his plan was practically conceived. No idea of a physical culture system had yet entered his head; no dream of a national magazine. All that he looked forward to, when he stepped down from the dusty coach, was his own gymnasium.

His relatives were sure he was a little mad. Here he was back again—without even a postal card to warn them he was coming—and he is no more than over the threshold than he begins to tell them of his wonderful dream. The words poured and tumbled from his lips. He was going to have his own gymnasium! All he wanted was a job, and he would work, economize, save, anything, until he could make this great ambition a reality. They looked at each other with a worried

air—the uncle and the aunt, the sister and the grandmother.

"The child's hungry," said the grandmother, and thereupon they made him welcome, and that night no more was said of his curious resolution.

But he tried to do just what he had planned, in the months that followed. He tried one job after another, finding it difficult to keep his mind on his work, so intensely were his thoughts concentrated on the first practical ambition of his life. First he tried to obtain work as a compositor, but he was too young to join the union; since then he has employed thousands of printers, but in those days they refused to let him learn to set type. He didn't care. He drove a delivery truck; he was a bill clerk, first with a photographic supply firm, and then with a saddlery firm; and finally he went to work once more with the grocery house in which his uncle was employed.

It was a wonder he held any of these jobs. While his hand wrote out bills, and added up sums, his mind and his spirit were in the gymnasium, which he had joined. He loved that gymnasium as a sculptor loves his studio, as a dancer loves the stage.

Long ago he wrote in *Physical Culture Magazine:*

"I very well remember the first time I visited this institution of health building as a member in good standing. A friend of mine accompanied me. I had selected a pair of tights and an armless shirt, which was the garb usually worn. When I had arrayed my-

self in this new costume I felt somewhat strange, and as I accompanied my friend from the dressing room to the gymnasium floor the emotions that stirred me would be hard to describe. Here I was in this gymnasium and the extraordinary opportunities offered there were to be mine. For considerably over two years my strongest ambition had been to develop my body to its fullest attainable degree of perfection. The opportunities were now before me and as I followed my friend down to the exercising floor I was somewhat abashed. This was my first experience in tights. My friend, no doubt, realized my predicament, and he soon made me feel thoroughly at home."

Macfadden's progress in this institution was truly amazing. No other pupil there had the fire, the zeal, the passion for the thing that so utterly possessed his imagination. He spent three hours or more there every day. Within a few months he was performing feats that it had taken athletes years to master. On the horizontal bars he soon did the back and forward giant swing and the back and forward somersault between the bars. Any circus acrobat will tell you that such progress is remarkable.

As he swung between those bars he sang aloud. For the first time since he had been born he was consciously happy. For the first time, life had assumed a real meaning, a significance, a promise of better things.

Now he knew, too, that he *could* be a Barnum and

Bailey acrobat, if he wished to. It was an old ambition. That knowledge gave him a thrill; a sense of power and self-reliance. He *could* do things, if he tried. But he was no longer allured by the spangled saw-dust arena. He told himself his was now a serious purpose.

Doing the gymnasium routine was not enough to satisfy his ardor. When he was not in the building, he still wanted to feel himself in the atmosphere. That restless desire sent him into bookshops, seeking volumes on dumbbell drills, exercises, all phases of the development of the body. Most of the books were worthless, but finally he came upon one that stirred him like a great breeze.

This book was William Blaikie's *"How to Get Strong."* Reading it was a tremendous experience to Macfadden. Carlyle once said that when he first read Plato, he felt as if he were reading his own ideas, set down cogently and clearly for the first time. Macfadden was now experiencing the same thrill of self-recognition. It seemed almost uncanny to him, but he was to learn later that this is a common experience to mankind.

But to Macfadden such an experience might well seem extraordinary, after so lonely a pilgrimage. Here was a true companion for him at last. Here was one who understood. The boy's own experiences seemed printed there in the pages of Blaikie's book. He felt heartened, strengthened, encouraged. How many

people in this world have been denied encouragement from persons standing near beside them, and found it waiting for him in the book of a stranger!

In the gymnasium, Macfadden was studying everything they taught. He wanted it all and he wanted plenty of it, and he got it. They called him a "crank" at the office, for he could talk of nothing else except gymnastics; finally he had to defeat one of the company's husky truck-drivers before his fellow employes would let him alone. But when they saw the bill-clerk tear the seat out of the truck-driver's trousers, the battle was won, and some of them even talked about joining the same gymnasium. At least it was a proud day for the bookkeeping department.

There was a man at the gymnasium in those days who greatly influenced Bernarr Macfadden. He was an American Greek and his name was George Baptiste. When Macfadden first met George Baptiste, the mighty fellow was holding out an eighty-pound dumbbell at arm's length on a level with his shoulder, holding it out nonchalantly, as if he had forgotten he *was* holding it out.

It was Baptiste who encouraged Macfadden to wrestle; Baptiste who was twenty pounds heavier than his young partner; Baptiste, who had a droll sense of humor, and a settled love of skill and combat on the mat.

Here it was, with the man Baptiste, that Macfadden learned the cunning, the adroitness, the ready courage

that was soon to make him one of the master wrestlers of his day. A wise assistant was George Baptiste. He trained Macfadden with the pride and patience of a Giorgione instructing Titian, or of Leopold Auer teaching Kreisler to play the fiddle. Holds older than the Egypt of Tut-ank-ah-men did Baptiste teach Macfadden; in all the varieties of wrestling he instructed him. They stood, the two of them, chest to chest, each grasping the other with arms locked about the body; that is what was called the Cumberland style. They clutched each other anywhere above the waist in the sturdy fury of the Cornwall and Devon; yes, and in the cruel Lancashire or what is called the catch-as-catch-can they struggled, and in the Græco-Roman which you will find immortalized in sculptured marble fragments in the great galleries of European cities.

More than once Baptiste probably had to reprove his eager partner. What wrestling Macfadden knew he had learned in a vicious school. That was when he had matched himself against farm-hands. Now he had to unlearn those cruel tricks. For Baptiste wanted to be an artist, and he loved the art of wrestling for its own sake. He and Macfadden learned it in that spirit, and he helped to inculcate into the young man a respect for this ancient sport that was classical in its feeling. Those hard lessons with Baptiste did much in forming Macfadden's character and they helped in making him a famous athlete.

It was all like a dream to the boy from the farm.

It truly did not seem real. The companionship of athletes meant a great deal to him. The thrill of those daily wrestling bouts was like nothing he had ever known before. And after them, when they were dripping with perspiration, they would run briskly around the indoor track, and then off to the hot and cold baths, and emerge, men feeling like gods.

What a joyous sensation for the youth who had been afraid they would bury him before he had begun to live! All the glow of youth, of strength, of health that Michael Angelo chiseled into his magnificent figure of "David" was in Macfadden's heart in those distant days.

"After such a course of exercises," he says, "one seems to be filled almost continuously with the throbbing, pulsating force of life. Your body has the opportunity to free itself of all accumulated impurities. The man who has never tasted his physical powers to the limit in some such way does not know what it means to be alive!"

What it means to be alive! Macfadden was learning what that meant. Who can fail to understand the intensity with which he hymns its praises?

It was a direct result of these friendly bouts that Macfadden made his first public appearance as a wrestler.

The manager of the gymnasium had been greatly impressed by the daily contests of Baptiste and his young friend. So were the other students. Crowds

gathered daily to watch them squirm and tug. Why not stage a public exhibition, suggested the manager. A wrestling tournament was held but Macfadden threw his opponent in less than a minute. Macfadden got his opponent with an over-shoulder arm-hold and threw him nearly across the stage.

Meanwhile, in his studies, Macfadden had adventured far beyond the Blaikie book. He was discovering that there was more to health than mere exercise. Food was of equal importance; what a man ate, that he became, and a wise man would eat the food that would make him the man he wanted to be.

To Macfadden this seemed to be the most exquisite common sense. He had yet to learn that the world does not take kindly to common sense, especially in certain rarefied scientific circles. His troubles in that regard were still a long way off.

Somewhere in his reading, Macfadden first encountered the idea of fasting. I shall not pause here to expound the theories to which Macfadden finally subscribes on this important subject; in a chapter devoted to his ideas about your body and his and mine I shall state his views simply and without comment. Let it suffice here to say that Macfadden at this time did encounter the idea that people ate too much; that they chewed up years of their lives to satisfy a false appetite, and that less food would mean more vitality.

That was what Macfadden wanted first for himself; vitality; that was what he meant to offer his pupils

later, when he had his own gymnasium. In the pursuit of that vitality, he was ready to try anything, and he promptly gave up three daily meals for two, and waited to see what happened.

He declares the result was at once observable. He is certain he discovered an immediate increase in vigor; rarely since then has he eaten more than two meals a day, and often he has but one. By this radical experiment, his wrestling endurance was almost doubled. Baptiste at once became a convert to the plan of two meals a day. Moreover, Macfadden insists he noticed an immediate increase in his mental alertness; the vigor of his brain was heightened; his interests were sharpened; he felt keener and more responsive to the activities of his life.

There is no question that Macfadden regards eating as the foundation stone on which health is builded. He has come to believe that this change from three to two meals a day was the most important step in his life. To it he attributes primarily his appalling energy, and thus he thanks it for much of the results he has achieved, in many diverse fields.

So important did he and Baptiste regard their dieting experiments, and so successful, that they embarked upon others. One of these was a strictly vegetarian diet. It was not a complete success, though it was not until much later that Macfadden admitted this to himself. One might call him today a lukewarm vegetarian. Baptiste and he tried other experiments, too,

although in this regard Macfadden's enthusiasm far outran his friend's. At one time, Macfadden reduced his diet to such a low mark that his pulse dropped down to thirty-five beats a minute, just half what a normal beat should be. After that, he ate enough food, and after that he was also more careful in his experiments.

At least, that is what he told me. I doubt it. In everything else Macfadden is careful, but he impresses me as ready to subject himself to any experiment, if it seems to promise something worth while for the body.

It is curious to note here an incident that bears out his statement that his mental and physical energies were rising so remarkably, under this stringent treatment. A bill collector in the firm where he was then employed was fired. Macfadden applied for and got the job, in addition to the one he was already holding down. He did this for a year, holding down both jobs, spending three hours a day in the gymnasium, and studying his books on health far into the night.

At the end of this year, Macfadden was a trained athlete. He had saved nearly three hundred dollars. What capital was in his brain and the muscles of his body, only the future could determine.

He had returned to St. Louis to become a physical culture teacher. How then did it happen that he became instead a cleaner of lace curtains?

For that was his next step!

This eccentric deviation from the plan Macfadden

had charted for himself was due to the trusting nature and the too ready enthusiasm of youth. It all began in the gymnasium. A certain young man wanted to go into the laundry business. He had had some experience in the laundry business, and he resolved to specialize on the cleaning of lace curtains. He induced Macfadden to join him.

In this wise, Macfadden became a laundryman, specializing in lace curtains; a business partner for the first and only time in his life. Macfadden was not made to work in double harness. Often I have heard him say that he would rather fail by following his own ideas than to be hampered by divided authority. The feeling probably springs from his experience as a laundryman. I spare you the details, except to inform you that the other partner vanished, and Macfadden ran the laundry alone.

He soon tired of the business; he had not started out to be a laundryman. In the back of his head, he had expected to make enough money out of the business to set himself up as a teacher of physical culture. But here he was, with a laundry on his hands—and he hated it.

The only compensation from the drudgery of that business had been his physical work, and a casual circus appearance during the evenings. Yes—a circus appearance! His boy dream came true, after a fashion, after all. Another of his gymnasium friends was appearing at a miniature "Greatest Show on Earth,"

just outside the town, and he asked Macfadden to exhibit with him. They did great swings and other stunts on the horizontal bars, and tumbling tricks, and posed proudly on the top of high ladders. Macfadden sprained a tendon in his foot, and yet he continued to appear with the injury bandaged. It was a successful engagement, and the sawdust trail to glory was open to him then and there.

But suddenly Macfadden became impatient, both of his laundry and the circus.

"I want to teach physical culture," he reflected. "What am I waiting for?"

And a few days thereafter his shingle was hanging out for all St. Louis to see.

CHAPTER III

The Man Who Found His Work

It was a very curious shingle.

From the window of an apartment on one of the principal streets it swung, glittering in its new gold and black letters:

BERNARR MACFADDEN—KINISTHERAPIST
TEACHER OF HIGHER PHYSICAL CULTURE

Kinistherapist!

The good people of St. Louis stopped and blinked. "Bernarr Macfadden, kinistherapist?" What on earth was that? Some of them had heard, even then, of Bernarr Macfadden as a promising young wrestler. But none of them had ever heard of a kinistherapist.

Where he found the word Macfadden does not remember. Perhaps he had come upon it in the long hours he had spent in the public libraries, reading all that he could on his favorite subject. Anyway, there it was—"kinistherapist"—in gold and black letters, and some of the more educated among the gaping pedestrians decided that from its Greek origins it must mean healing by movement.

But what did *that* mean?

A goodly number of them came in to inquire; some

of them who came to scoff remained to swing dumb-bells and change their diet. This Kinistherapist, this teacher of the higher physical culture was an earnest young man; he was diligent about his business and such was his passionate enthusiasm for what he was doing that his pupils became imbued with a contagious zest to build up their strength. He talked to them of his own struggles.

"Weakness is a crime," he told them, looking them squarely in the eyes. "Don't be a criminal."

That was his credo and he was never tired of repeating it. His kinistherapeutic studio was a modest but instantaneous success. In his private classes he was making money in the work he loved better than anything else in the world. For the first time in his life he was tasting the sweet taste of an ambition that was nearing its realization.

And yet, in a very little while, he closed his studio and abandoned the business he had built up.

Nothing could show more clearly than this sudden action, how emphatically in earnest he was about his career. His first success had not turned his head. Instead of that, it had made him aware of more than one deficiency in himself. Considering the lonely life of privation that was behind him, he was surprisingly well taught, but he had concentrated his solitary study along the special line of health, together with the reading of romantic novels, which was one of his besetting vices. There were simple elements of edu-

The cover of one of the early issues of Macfadden's health magazine.

Bernarr Macfadden, wearing the tights and loose-fitting blouse he elected as lecturer and gymnast.

cation which he did not have and which he now found he badly needed. He needed, too, a background which he had been denied. Not until he received into his own studio prosperous men of the great world into which he had never entered did he realize how precious were these missing links of education.

That was why he closed his studio and took the post of physical instructor in a small school at Bunker Hill, Illinois. There he worked harder than he had ever worked before in his already laborious lifetime. His salary was very small, because in lieu of what he should have received he had asked for the rudiments of English and history, and some understanding and knowledge of those other, gentler things which everybody else seemed to know. He traded his knowledge of the human body for their knowledge of the human race.

All his leisure was spent in study that year; study under the direction of men of at least some competence; study so intense that he did three years' work in one. When it was over, he was more eager than ever to resume his interrupted career as a teacher of physical culture. He had made many more experiments upon his own body in the meantime; he had continued avidly to study and read, and the outlines of his future gospel were dimly taking shape in his brain; shaping themselves nearer to the design of a complete system.

And now there emerges in the mind of Macfadden

one trait for which I can find no explanation at all. I mean his dramatic instinct. He has, as everyone knows, the showmanship impulse that can capitalize and dramatize a particular idea and thus appeal to the public as a mass mind. It is this more than anything else that explains his achievements; his influence in the country. Yet until this time in his life he had shown no evidences of such an instinct. What he did when he left Bunker Hill school was dramatic, startling, and bound to capture the attention and admiration of the people. From where did he get that natural instinct?

To make his new debut as a teacher, he decided that he should do something to advertise himself; something startling that would make people stop and consider him seriously.

He was an expert wrestler, but merely to appear as a wrestler would not be enough. He must do the daring, the dramatic, the unusual. No one told him this. He figured out the problem for himself, and finally he found the answer.

It was an amazing decision. Moreover, it was the best possible advertisement for a teacher of physical culture.

He decided to win, in succession, the light-weight, middle-weight and heavy-weight championship in wrestling.

This was an audacious plan, but such was his confidence in his system of physical culture that Macfadden

felt no doubts about his success. He was certain that he could train down to the light-weight, change his diet and eat himself into the middle-weight, and finally into the heavy-weight. As for winning the matches, he was sure he could do that too.

Yes, he was full of self-confidence. There is an old adage that reads, "The fool, not knowing it could not be done, went ahead and did it."

Macfadden did not know it could not be done, but he was certainly nobody's fool. He knew exactly what he was about, and he promptly issued his astonishing challenge in all the newspapers. By a training which might easily dismay a Jack Dempsey today, he got his weight down to the first limit—one hundred and thirty-five pounds, stripped.

In front of a huge and cheering audience, he easily defeated the light-weight champion. It was one of the most sensational matches in a national wrestling tournament then being held in St. Louis. The papers gave him their accolade; if he wanted to be a professional wrestler and tour the world, the way was then open to him, and bright with temptations.

Macfadden had no intention at all of becoming a professional wrestler. But he was keenly awake to his present opportunity. At once he abandoned his sensational plan of winning successive championships; abandoned it for a scheme even more sensational.

On the morning following his victory he issued a

challenge that made the sporting fans of the country gasp.

He threw down the gauntlet to the welter-weight champion of Chicago.

It looked like sheer folly. Old sporting writers shook their heads and said that Macfadden had lost his head, after one big victory. They had watched many a newcomer before; they had seen them come and go, and you couldn't fool *them.* They knew that such a feat couldn't be done.

Macfadden was too wise to answer back. He had issued his challenge and it had been accepted. That was enough. He would do his talking with his muscles, straining in the contest; talking in the language that muscles had taught him, in those long, long clashes in his gymnasium days.

Everybody was sure this would be a short contest, with Macfadden on his back before he knew what was happening to him. It was short enough, lasting only four minutes, but it ended with Macfadden on top.

Now he was truly a figure in wrestling; a man to be watched. What would he do next? They have been asking that about Macfadden ever since. What would he do next? He issued a new and infinitely more dangerous challenge; a "defi" as the papers called it, to Frank Whitmore, the heavy-weight champion of Chicago; a man with a national reputation and about twenty-five pounds heavier than Macfadden.

Again the same thing happened. The sporting

writers said it couldn't be done. The man who had won the light-weight championship couldn't win the heavy-weight championship. If they didn't know, who did?

Well, Macfadden wasn't sure they knew what they were talking about. But he was perfectly well aware of the critical contest that lay before him. Only his implicit faith in his own theories of training; his belief that his secret knowledge of diet and exercise would give him the advantage—only this sustained him in the face of much prophetic ridicule.

On the contest he was staking a great deal. If he won, he was made. He could embark upon his career as a physical culturist with the certain knowledge that his amazing exploits would bring him all the pupils he needed. Moreover, he was preparing the way for that by giving out interviews, predicting his success because of his own peculiar methods of body building. He was in Missouri, where the people have to be shown. And the sporting fans shook their heads and waited to *be* shown.

It was a herculean struggle.

A devil seemed to be in the big man from Chicago; a strong, unyielding, grim, determined devil who would not be budged. In the brilliantly lighted theater, one of the largest in St. Louis, Whitmore and Macfadden toiled and struggled before an intensely excited crowd that jammed the building to the doors.

The fact that Macfadden was giving the big boy

from the stock-yards a real battle was thrill enough for them. They had thought it would be over almost any minute. But minutes passed, and dragged to half an hour, and neither man was down, and neither was spent with his titanic exertions. Three-quarters of an hour and there was not yet the dust of defeat upon their shoulders. The crowd was in a frenzy of wonder and delight. An hour had come and gone, and the spectators could scarcely contain themselves, so taut was the suspense. Any moment, they felt sure, Macfadden must be crushed under the frightful strength of his big opponent.

But not until an hour and a half had passed, did the first fall come. Down went the champion, down went the terrible Whitmore, giving way beneath the stern, unyielding pressure of the lighter man. Again the big man went down, not ten minutes later, and Macfadden faced that howling mob of men and bowed to them—the heavy-weight champion, in spite of all, made so by his belief in one idea.

Now he was ready. Now he had behind him a reputation that entitled him to teach the other fellow what he knew. No longer was it necessary for him to hang out a sign with a jaw-breaking word on it to attract attention. At last he was seriously embarked, and more than ever Macfadden felt an almost religious fervor for his work.

Not a week later Macfadden had made his first public appearance as a lecturer on physical culture. He

was as frightened as a child speaking a first piece in Sunday school. Once before, in the Bunker Hill school, he had tried to talk to a gymnasium class and had failed rather miserably. But now he was on fire with a purpose. He had proved something and he wanted to tell the whole world about it. He had been booked for a wrestling exhibition, and at its close he made his talk, on the value of physical culture in building health.

"I do not remember ever facing an antagonist who made me more nervous," said Macfadden later. "The dread of breaking down at first almost unnerved me. I threw myself into that speech with all the fervid intensity of which I was capable. I am inclined to believe it was the best speech I have ever made."

In that first speech, he was face to face at last with humanity in the mass; humanity in the hundreds that night, a miniature of the humanity in the millions to whom he was finally to address himself upon that same idea. It was the real beginning of his career. Before this night, this night of that speech, he had never known the sensation of expressing himself to a large group. It was a gripping sensation; a taste of what life might be like, if one went after it.

Macfadden went home that night, walking on air. Those people had listened to him with the most profound attention. There had been guilt and fear on their faces, when he warned them of the dangers of neglect of good health and its principles. There had

been hope in their eyes as he assured them health could be regained, if one did not wait too long.

Yes, certainly, this was the real beginning of the career of Bernarr Macfadden.

It was now clear to him that if he had followed up his wrestling triumphs by making a state-wide tour, he would build up a following for himself that would greatly benefit his work as a teacher. Such a tour was immediately arranged.

There is a natural temptation to linger here over the exploits of Macfadden in the wrestling arena. If there were not so much to be told of the later part of his career, it would all be interesting enough. He, himself, attaches a great deal of significance to wrestling, not only in physical development, but also in building those essentials of character which we call endurance, tenacity, determination, the will to win, the ability to wait, the alertness that life demands of all its victors.

Once he wrote of wrestling:

"Each man depends absolutely upon himself, upon the united exertion of all the muscles of his body, without the aid of any artificial weapon."

And that, in one sense, at least, is life as Macfadden sees it—a continued contest, in which a man depends absolutely upon himself. Having been forced to do just that practically from childhood, the imagery, the allegory of wrestling must naturally shape itself in his mind as a symbol of importance.

Let it suffice, then, to say here that Macfadden developed in a short time into one of the great wrestlers of America. Only once did he suffer defeat, and that was when he consented to wrestle in a style with which he was not familiar. Subsequently he defeated this antagonist in his own style of wrestling.

It is greatly to his credit he was not led away from his ambition by the arena's glitter; that he wanted to be something else besides a wrestling champion. With such a background, it would be easy to understand, if he had decided he had now found his place in the world, and felt that he had succeeded. Not so! Not for a moment had he forgotten his plan; his deliberately conceived ambition to be an expert in all phases of bodily culture. To him it then seemed that he was ready to begin. But a curious circumstance undeceived him, and again made him alter his course, most unexpectedly.

He had written a novel and the various publishers to whom it was submitted turned it down!

Does it surprise you that Macfadden, the athlete, had tried to write a novel? If you study the man from first to last, nothing will surprise you. Remember that his one relaxation had been the reading of romances. Remember that he was possessed of a real and unsuspected power—a natural gift of imagination. Remember that all his mind was dedicated to the preaching of health and the upbuilding of the body.

Why, then, should one really be surprised to find

that Macfadden did write a novel, complete, of eighty thousand words; that he wrote it at this young and untutored part of his life, or that he should call it "The Athlete's Conquest"?

Upon that manuscript he had toiled with such labor, with such devotion, that in his eyes it assumed the loving aspect of a masterpiece. In the dangers of his hero, the author Macfadden suffered real agonies; in his victories, he experienced all the glow and elation of vicarious triumph. When it was completed, Macfadden looked upon his work and found it good and he promptly took it into the office of a publisher.

The first question Macfadden put to the publisher was about terms. No doubt that the manuscript would be accepted had for a moment entered his mind. He journeyed all the way to Chicago to place the precious pages personally into the hands of the editor.

When he called again, a few days later, the publisher gently but firmly pressed the manuscript back into its author's keeping.

"What's the matter with it?" gasped Macfadden, unable to believe the dreadful truth that such a decisive action indicated.

"Well, in the first place it has no plot," was the publisher's reply. "It is poorly expressed, crude and ungrammatical."

Macfadden turned, with the manuscript under his arm, and walked out into the street.

Crude! Poorly expressed! Ungrammatical!

Then he was *not* ready to begin his career as a teacher! If he expressed himself crudely, ungrammatically, they might not listen to him. He was not ready to begin, after all.

Into the limbo of forgotten things Macfadden there and then cast his brilliant career as a wrestler. That career meant less than nothing to him, beside this one, bright, consuming ambition. Within a week, he had obtained another position as physical instructor in a large military school in a small town, not far from St. Louis.

But this time he was a physical instructor with a difference. He taught those boys not only football—their team had some bloody victories in that game—and the usual athletics; he also taught them his hobby, his creed, his personal religion of clean living, glorious health and strength victorious. He was using this class as a laboratory, in which to experiment with his own curriculum. It was a valuable experience.

More than that, too, he was doing. He was studying; working hard upon those books and lessons which the professors set him to do. "Crude! Poorly expressed! Ungrammatical!"

So well did he apply himself here that a minor miracle happened. He revised his manuscript, and found a publisher for his novel. *"The Athlete's Conquest"* was actually published, and certainly it was the proudest day thus far in Macfadden's life when a

copy of his own novel was in his hands, held tightly against his heart.

"The Athlete's Conquest," by Bernarr Macfadden! —the book was there, a real thing, so real that his hands tingled as he held it. What a strange thing to have happened to the boy who was born on the little backwoods farm, with the heritage of death and dull despair in his veins. I pause when I think of what it must have meant to Macfadden, and I remember that Browning once wrote:

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power.
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic that proved too hard.
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky.
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once, we shall hear it by and by."

No exploit in the wrestling ring before the cheering crowds had ever released such a gush of emotion in him as this strange novel which he, himself, alone, unaided, in such mental agony, had brought forth into the world. Again was a new world opened to him. He could write what he had to say, and reach hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands who could never come to his classroom. He could reach and he could teach people all over the world, because he had found in himself the ability to lay down his thoughts in black letters on white paper. There and then the first dim vision of his magazine was born.

The professors read his book and the students read

it, and the praise that some bestowed upon him was like dew upon a thirsty place. They did not say it was crude, or poorly expressed, or ungrammatical.

Macfadden felt, at last, that he was ready to begin to teach.

It was in Sedalia, Missouri, that Macfadden opened his first class, and it was an immediate success. To advertise his work, he issued wrestling challenges, and lectured on physical culture after each invariable victory. With the profits of a successful season in his pocket, he went to the World's Fair in Chicago; to this day he will become eloquent over the dream-like effect of the beautiful exhibition to his unsophisticated eyes. The fountains, the lagoon, the peristyle—it was a boy's first introduction to beauty and to grandeur.

Here in Chicago, and at the Fair, Macfadden made the acquaintance of a man destined mightily to influence his life, just as, years before, the imperturbable Baptiste had influenced it.

This man was Alexander Whitely and he was in the exerciser business. At the World's Fair were all things shown, from Jumbo, the elephant, to Whitely's Exerciser, and I am sure you will understand that Macfadden found the exerciser and its inventor the most supremely interesting objects of the entire exhibition.

Within an hour after Macfadden had stood by and watched the demonstration, his stars were wheeling in their courses toward his future destiny. The exerciser

was an affair of pulleys, ropes and springs; you put your foot into a device at the bottom and pulled this way and that, and so developed the muscles of your arms, your chest, your torso, your legs; it was a patented home gymnasium that could be carried in a violin case.

Macfadden and Whitely hit it off pretty well, and until the World's Fair was closed, Macfadden helped sell those exercisers. The experience thrilled him. He felt that he had been brought that much nearer his goal. All that he needed, now, was capital, and Macfadden knew how to get that. For a few months, he returned to St. Louis, promoted a few wrestling matches, and then, with a few hundred dollars, he started East, resolved that from thenceforth he would do nothing else in his life but devote himself to his own work.

This resolve he kept, as you shall see.

Oddly enough, he had picked on Boston as his objective, and the reason for the choice was really curious. In those days, Boston was the authentic intellectual center of the United States. The traditions of Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and Emerson hung over it like a fragrant incense. Macfadden had written a novel, and he had definite intentions toward expressing himself through the printed word. Because he actually believed he could study to better advantage in such an atmosphere, and progress more effectively

Bernarr Macfadden in his twenties. Note the fine physical and muscular development during this period of youth.

Bernarr Macfadden in his sixtieth year. Compare with picture on preceding page and note that his physical development, if anything, shows greater perfection and smoother development after those thirty odd years.

there, he chose Boston, with a naïvete at which you will be the last to smile.

He never got there.

Once in New York, Macfadden could not have been taken away from it without a detachment of the marines. The magnitude and splendor of the city, the tense feeling of energy and growth, the song of that great metropolis entered into him. Macfadden was born in Missouri, but like many another man, he was reborn in New York.

"This is my city," he said to himself. "I belong here. I am a New Yorker. And I'm going to be a New Yorker always."

In his pocket he found there remained just fifty dollars, when he stepped off the ferry.

But fifty dollars is a fortune, when you have with it courage and hope and determination and ability and all those old copy-book maxims, at which it is now the fashion to sneer a little, and youth in the bargain. At least, fifty dollars was all the fortune he had, and he proceeded to make the best of it.

He found two large furnished rooms for rent, on Twenty-second Street, not far from Broadway. In front of the door he hung framed pictures of himself in a gymnasium costume; he ordered a thousand circulars, announcing his course in physical culture, and illustrating them with pictures of himself in muscular poses.

Then he sat down in his new studio and waited for customers.

And he waited a long time! Two long, heart-breaking weeks passed and the fifty dollars had almost vanished, when the first customer entered that front door and asked what the terms might be.

"My charge is fifty dollars," said Macfadden.

That was a mistake. He had not meant to say that, at all. "Fifty dollars" came out of his mouth before he had had time to think—and only because he had been thinking about and bemoaning the fifty dollars which he had no more.

The man paid the fifty dollars then and there. When he was gone, Macfadden gasped for air, locked the door, walked down the street to a restaurant, and ate a square meal, his first in more than a week.

Another customer came and another. The business prospered. The lonely wanderer from Missouri began to know a peace and contentment altogether new and remarkable. Life was sweeter than he had ever imagined it could be. He looked out upon the world with a joyous satisfaction.

And pray why not? He might be pardoned, if he then believed that he had begun, at last, to succeed. By the sweat of his brow he had made more than one dream come true. Here, in his own studio, he was earning a decent living; more money by ten times than he ever had made before—and in what an occupation!

Men with huge and sagging paunches came to him,

and he put them to work in his studio, and their big stomachs melted away and they stood, nearer than before to the good God in whose image they believed they were created. Other men came to him with a great fear in their hearts because they had been turned down by the examining physicians of the insurance companies. Macfadden put them to work with his exercises, he told them what to eat, and what not to drink, he threw their cigarettes out of his window, and put dumbbells in their hands instead—and within a little while some did get their insurance policies. He added weight to the skinny bodies of men who were ashamed to put on a bathing suit. He made lean men take on flesh, as quickly as he made fat men take it off. He gave a good appetite to men who had lost all desire for food; he brought pleasant slumber to men who had rolled and tossed in the hot agonies of insomnia.

All this without drugs! All this without pills, or powders, knives or sheepskin!

Why shouldn't the boy from the backwoods farm of Missouri look out upon life that had begun upon him with such unkindness; look out upon it and smile and thank his happy stars that finally and at last he was doing the work that he loved?

"Blessed is the man who has found his work," wrote Thomas Carlyle. "Let him ask no other blessedness."

When summer came, and the season was over, Macfadden was unwilling to pause, although by now he

had accumulated a decent capital. He made an arrangement with Alexander Whitely by which he should travel from city to city, introducing the exerciser, but as soon as autumn came, he was back in New York, in a more imposing studio, located in lower Fifth Avenue when that lordly boulevard *was* lower Fifth Avenue.

Here his prosperity was beyond all his expectations. He was amazed at the bankers, the professional men, even the idle rich men who came to him and whispered amazing secrets into his ears; unbelievable secrets of their physical condition. That studio was often a physical culture confessional.

Macfadden was making real money. Yet he was not money-mad. In fact, making money was the least objective in his mind. That crusading spirit which is always his animating motive was stirring strongly within him; he wanted to reach greater numbers of people. Many of his new-found friends in New York attempted to dissuade him from his plans. They pointed out to him that he was now establishing himself in a field where he could remain supreme indefinitely. His career as a wrestler gave him an unimpeachable standing. Everyone had confidence in him. His pupils showed amazing results. "Go to Macfadden and get well," was beginning to be a slogan in the clubs. He was one of the first men who was showing other men how to keep fit.

Nevertheless he was not satisfied. He felt that his

message was too big, too general in its appeal, to be confined to the few who would pay him big prices. Often he had been told that to keep his classes small and his prices high was the straight course for him to take; that it would lead him to certain fortune.

He did not want a fortune in dollars so much as he wanted to give the world a fortune in health. In him was the messianic urge to give unto all mankind the truth that he had discovered.

At first this had not seemed to involve any radical changes in his plans. All he need do would be to contribute regularly to the newspapers and magazines, and to embark on occasional lecture tours. But after submitting half a hundred articles to the newspapers and having them all rejected he was forced to realize that such a scheme was impractical. The editors did not tell him his articles were crude or ungrammatical; they had an even more damning cause of refusal.

"Nobody is interested in this health stuff," was their universal attitude.

Macfadden sat in his studio one night and thought very seriously about it. The editors wouldn't give the public the information Macfadden had for them, although the patent medicine advertisements flooded their sheets.

Then there recurred to the thinking physical culture teacher the stirrings of a vague old dream. Long ago, he had dreamed it; long ago, it seemed to him now, though it was not really so long past; back there in the

military school when he had opened the pages of his own novel. What had been those stirring phantasies in his mind in that wonderful time? A magazine! His own magazine! A magazine whose mission it should be to spread for all who knew how to read even the simplest words in the language the priceless lessons of good health.

It had been scarcely a dream then—only a vagrant thought. Now it became more tangible. Macfadden was feeling a little disappointed, a little hurt, a little angry, because the newspapers would not print his articles. It is in such moments that our dreams come back to us and urge upon us their realization.

Why shouldn't he have his *own* publication? One in which there should be no will except his own to say what could be published; what the people could read and what they could not? Was not that surely the way for him to proceed?

It was after midnight in the studio, as Macfadden crouched there, thinking and dreaming. His own magazine! It was a great thought—almost a terrifying thought. His own magazine! Could he do it? Why couldn't he do it? What was there to stop him?

Only the thing that stops so many of us—money!

Macfadden was making money, but he was now sufficiently worldly wise to realize that to publish a magazine he needed real financial resources. One couldn't go far without capital.

How could he get enough money to publish—*Physical Culture Magazine?*

Physical Culture Magazine!

Cold streaming chills coursed down his spine as he thought of that name for the first time. The thing was an actuality to him the moment that name was born in his mind. He spoke the words aloud, lovingly, and repeated them, over and over again. For the moment he could not revert back to the grim obstacle of cash. *Physical Culture Magazine!* How well it sounded!

How could he get enough money to start *Physical Culture Magazine?*

He could try to obtain a partner, but he wouldn't consider that. He had already had one partner, when he was in the laundry business; he wouldn't have another, most certainly, in this magazine, which he wanted for his very own, entirely under his control, subject to no man's dictation except his own; a book in the pages of which he could say what he would, frankly, fearlessly, and with the burning passion with which he lived, day and night.

No—there could be no partner in *Physical Culture Magazine.*

Where, then, was the money coming from?

Macfadden hated business and all its works. He was happy in his present regime, where the business part amounted only to stating prices and collecting fees. But he was ready to do anything to get the

capital for this great dream, and that was why he closed his studio and became a business man.

Within the next year, Bernarr Macfadden invented, patented, manufactured and sold his own exerciser in great quantities.

If there were time and space, the story of that year would make, of itself, an absorbing chapter, simply through the orderly recital of its facts and events. But Macfadden himself regards it as the unhappiest year of his life. He was miserable. No longer was he a teacher of health. He was now a manufacturer, a business man, selling goods and getting money, and finding himself a very disagreeable companion to live with. He felt like a fish out of water, and only the glittering prospect of his future magazine sustained him.

After firmly establishing this new exerciser business in America, Macfadden decided to invade England. The more the business expanded, the greater his profits; and the greater his profits, the sooner would he have the desired capital with which to undertake the publication.

One of the blackest memories of his life was that first voyage to England. The strong man went down under the onslaught of *mal de mer*. On the third day out he was ready to make a vow to remain in England for the rest of his life and let the American exerciser business go to the devil, rather than endure the return voyage.

In England, the exerciser achieved immediate popularity. To further its sale, Macfadden undertook a lecture tour, in which he used a posing cabinet, very much after the manner of the strong man whose work in the Winter Garden I discussed with my friend in the first chapter of this volume.

It was here that he fully developed his lecture tour beyond the mere introduction of a patented exerciser. His public talks and exhibitions became sermons on physical culture, and now Macfadden found that he had a firm grasp upon his subject and a magnetic hold upon his audiences. This decided him upon a daring step.

He would alter the aspect of these appearances entirely. The lectures would no longer be free to the public. He would charge the usual price of admission, and give the crowd its money's worth in the secrets of health, and let the exerciser be only an incidental.

Accordingly, Macfadden, with his Yankee accent and his enthusiasm, hired a ticket seller and a ticket taker, and advertised a lecture on physical culture.

Even to one of his sanguine temperament, the result came as a surprise. The hall was packed; the response enthusiastic and Macfadden felt that the long years of his waiting were fulfilled, and that now he was truly master of his subject. At once he continued his tour through England; he went ahead as his own advance agent, and was his own business manager, advertising manager, press representative.

Amid these unexpected surroundings, the first physical culture magazine was born. It was nothing more than a four-page folder, containing articles on health in most abbreviated form, and advertisements for the exerciser. Of course it was not sold, being distributed outside the lecture hall, but a subscription price was named on its flagstaff, and to his surprise, Macfadden soon found a number of voluntary subscriptions in his mail every morning.

That decided him. There was no doubt in his mind that a magazine devoted to physical culture would sweep the country. He still lacked sufficient capital, but that couldn't matter to him any longer. The response to that little four-page folder had set Macfadden's blood on fire.

He renounced his vow never again to cross the Atlantic. He forsook a dozen lecture offers in England. The time had come for Macfadden to start his magazine; within a week he was aboard ship on his way back to the magic metropolis, ready for the big adventure.

CHAPTER IV

The Strange Story of Physical Culture Magazine

The story of any American magazine that lived through the cataclysmic changes of the first quarter of the twentieth century is bound to contain some of the history of that period. Indeed one of the deficiencies of our literature is the lack of a good history of our magazines. The nearest approach to such a book was Professor Pattee's volume on the short story and that was only a magazine history by accident. The rise and fall of periodicals during those incredible twenty-five years is like a chart of the rapidly changing ideas and customs of mankind. Periodicals came and went, soaring into huge circulations, and then disappearing from the face of the earth, while others aged rapidly and shrivelled into a disgraceful senile poverty. Some of those that have survived have undergone literary face-liftings and gland transplantations of every conceivable sort to restore their lost energy and vitality.

The energy and vitality of Macfadden's magazine has never needed any such pagan practices. It possessed a natural vigor, born of a fundamental appeal. Of all the publications that rose on muck-raking and fell with a dull thud when the excitement was over, or

those that capitalized one running fancy after another, *Physical Culture* was one of the few that grew steadily, healthily.

Equally, of course, the history of *Physical Culture Magazine* is the history of Bernarr Macfadden. In a time when the idea of a personality as editor was falling before the modern machine idea of organization, Macfadden was zealously, eagerly, belligerently the personality behind his magazine. He remains so today.

Pick up the current copy of *Physical Culture Magazine* and you will find that it begins with an editorial by Macfadden; probably there will be a series of exercises in it which he devised, which he has described and for the pictures of which he has posed. More than likely he will also have an article in the issue touching on his favorite topic of diet. Certainly there will be three pages of additional editorials by him; those editorials which are grouped under the title of "Bernarr Macfadden's Viewpoint," and which are just so much monthly gospel to more than a million readers.

From the beginning the magazine had a stormy career, always in a fight, always on the same side in every fight—natural methods of healing against what Macfadden called unnatural methods—and throughout its spectacular course it touched the life of the nation at a hundred intimate points. To look back over the old files is nothing short of a revelation. There you will find Macfadden thundering for reforms that today are

accomplished facts. But in the old days whenever he wrote those thunderers he added to his reputation as a fanatic. Read them now and they seem only common sense. But common sense is generally recognized only by the next generation.

Though the program that Macfadden advocated when he started his magazine has since undergone many modifications, there can be no question that *Physical Culture Magazine* has retained its original idea in the face of many changing tides of thought. In the very first issue, Macfadden published his platform, and he could republish it in *Physical Culture Magazine* today without revision.

Here is that platform; his opening announcement, in the first number of the first volume of the magazine:

"It is the Editor's firm and conscientious belief that weakness is a crime.

"That one has no more excuse for being weak than he can have for going hungry when food is at hand.

"That if one possesses sufficient vitality to remain alive under the abnormal conditions of sickness, he has more than sufficient strength to remain in vigorous health.

"That usually disease is simply an effort on the part of the physical mechanism to right itself, and is a means adopted to attain the end of effecting a cure. That there is no disease without a cure, and if the cause is removed the body will cure itself.

"That disease is not sent by divine providence, but

is a result of the victim's own ignorance or carelessness.

"That vigorous, pulsating health, with all the energies of mind and body that accompanies this exalted physical condition, is within the reach of all.

"That health and strength of a high degree is the natural condition of man, and it is otherwise only when one's life does not conform to Nature's laws.

"That there are thousands in every civilized country annually dying from consumption, general debility, heart trouble, and other causes too numerous to mention, who could easily have been brought back to health, strength, and power, had they adopted rational methods at the proper time.

"That his great purpose in life is to preach the gospel of health, strength, and the means of acquiring it.

"That the finest and most satisfying results that can be acquired from proper physical culture are the cure of disease and the development of that energy, vitality, and health essential to the success and well being of life."

Macfadden had started!

On his return from England, he had immediately undertaken the publication of his magazine. At first he had money enough to do little more than duplicate his first effort in England, and using the magazine practically as a circular for his exerciser. But he now paid a great deal more attention to the articles that

he wrote—and he had the good sense to charge a nickel for it.

It grew rapidly enough. Subscriptions came in after every lecture and demonstration of the exerciser. Macfadden soon began to get outside advertisements, too.

Within six months its first printer would not have recognized the magazine. There was very little space given to editorial puffs for the exerciser. Only in the advertising pages did it appear. The editorial section of the little magazine contained articles on various features of health; how to improve the complexion by diet—probably the first article of its kind ever published in the States—the care of the hair, muscle building, and kindred subjects. There was also a fiction serial, for Macfadden, having often waited long weeks for the next instalment of a story that had snared him, was a firm believer in serials. In fact, this conviction he holds today in the face of much inter-office opposition. In spite of frequent protests, he has two serials running all the time in *Physical Culture Magazine;* you will certainly find them in the latest copy.

At the end of that first six months Macfadden had learned much, and the magazine had grown surprisingly. It was now illustrated, it had colored covers, the advertisements had greatly increased, it was printed on decent paper, and Macfadden had managed to obtain for it a newsstand distribution which was sending up its sales most remarkably.

Under one nom-de-plume after another, Macfadden was writing practically the whole magazine, including the advice to women department. More than one letter from women readers brought the blush of modesty to his brow.

It was at this time that Macfadden got into his first fight with the magazine—and it very nearly cost him his sight.

The newspapers were filled, in those days, with advertisements designed to scare young men into seven fits and drag them into the clutches of the charlatans. The object of these advertisements was to frighten young men regarding certain symptoms and irregularities in themselves. There is nothing that can so frighten a young man about himself as a threat against his manhood. These numerous charlatans were capitalizing the terrors of youth in this regard, and their ignoble business was made the more profitable because sex education was practically unknown in those days. Fathers could not be brought to talk frankly to their sons; the general calm acceptance of elemental truths around us today was simply inconceivable then. A mother who would talk to her daughter, at least until the night before her marriage, would have been considered fit for a museum. Young people trembled as they thought about themselves, but they could not find a kindly or sensible advisor.

The results of this condition Macfadden had encountered, not once, but a thousand times over, in

gymnasiums and in his various athletic activities. Particularly in his coaching days had he seen the disastrous effects of silence about sex and its dangers.

Now certain of these rascally charlatans had come to him and tried to advertise in his magazine. Macfadden pitched one of them bodily down the stairs. He went back to his one-room office, where his exerciser business was being greatly neglected while he tried to build up a magazine, and he thought about the scoundrel he had just thrown out.

As a result, Macfadden decided to write a book on the simple truths of sex, for young men to read, and instead of selling the book, he decided to give it away as a premium with a year's subscription to the magazine.

He promptly gave the book a name, made an outline of its contents, and inserted an advertisement in the magazine the forms of which were just then closing for the current issue.

His plan was sensible enough. Six weeks would elapse before the magazine reached the newsstands. In those six weeks he would write the book, and by the time orders began to come in, he would have the books ready for delivery.

Such was his plan, but like the best laid schemes of mice and men, something happened to this one. One thing after another intervened, until finally, one morning, Macfadden found his desk swamped, inundated,

overflowing with orders for the book which he had not even started to write.

He began working day and night, like a madman, for the one thing he dreaded was to lose the confidence which he had been building up with a constantly enlarging audience of subscribers.

"I remember the night when I laid down my pen, after completing the last proofs of this book," Macfadden told me once. "I went to bed with an inordinate sense of relief, for now the delivery of the book was simply a matter of presswork and binding. Had I known what was in store for me the next morning, I hardly think I should have slept so soundly that night, notwithstanding the exhausted state of my nervous system. When I did awake the next morning, my eyes felt peculiar, and I seemed to be practically devoid of energy. But I had acquired the habit of spurring myself on. The duties and responsibilities that I had taken upon my shoulders had become an inexorable law to me. Therefore I arose at the usual hour to go down to my office. I noticed that everything looked curiously dim, and I felt weak and ill, but I washed and dressed in a mechanical way and started downtown. On the way I bought a morning newspaper, but when I looked at the printed page I could see nothing but a lot of black smudges. It came upon me with a shock that I was nearly blind.

"For years I had been burning the candle at both ends. I was paying the accumulated penalty for the

The honor table at dinner tendered Mr. Macfadden at the Hotel Piccadilly in London, following the dinner given in his honor in the House of Parliament attended by more than forty members of the House of Commons. The above picture includes Lord Decies, Sir Nicholas Grattan-Doyle, Sir William Arbuthnot Lane, Dean Inge, The Reverend Father Woodlock, and Bernarr Macfadden.

Bernarr Macfadden with a group of New York's prominent business men, at the Federation Bank Anniversary. Reading from left to right: Harry Guggenheim, Bernarr Macfadden, Peter J. Brady, Otto Kahn, Ralph Easeley, General J. Harbord.

mistakes that I had made. I had supposed that it was possible for me to work night and day, and that my energies would never fail me. Instead of going on to the office, I went back to my room and thought over the situation carefully. I could not work in this condition. I must regain my eyesight. Also I understood that this threatened to lead to much more serious symptoms. The possibility of going blind tortured me. In fact, it was a breakdown of the most serious kind."

Right here was one test which will show you how much in earnest was Macfadden about his physical culture program. No man wants to toy with his eyes. Blindness is an affliction from which we all recoil. If ever Macfadden could be prodded into a doctor's office, now was the time. He would have to go to see a doctor about his eyes.

He did nothing of the kind. He believed that the principles which he advocated were fundamental; that they were of the constitution, the whole human system, and that as the disorders of the stomach could be corrected, so could the disorders of the eyes. He felt sure he knew what was wrong. In his intense desire to make a success of his magazine, he had neglected his personal exercise. What he was preaching to others to do, what he had done so long and so well for himself, he had had no longer the time to do.

But if he knew the trouble, he felt he also knew the cure. And the fact is that he did recover the full use

of his vision; today he is proud of his long-seeing eyes and will cheerfully contest with you in reading distant signs. From his experience, he evolved the principles of his eye-treatment which are told in one of his most interesting books.

Macfadden got his sight back, to find that his book for young men was increasing the sale of *Physical Culture Magazine,* night and day, all over the land.

All this occurred at the close of the beginning year of that curious little pamphlet with its new and quite strange message for Americans. Beyond all question it was and will forever remain the most exciting year in the more or less exciting life of Bernarr Macfadden. All of his worldly success was then ahead of him, but he knew nothing of that. What he did know, what did thrill him then as nothing has ever thrilled him since, was the knowledge that he had made his ambition come true. It was tangibly and visibly in his hands. Bernarr Macfadden was not only a physical culturist, not only a teacher of that wonderful science and art that gave new life to his fellows, but more than that, he was an editor, a publisher, his own master, able to put down on paper what he believed, and offer it to all who would read.

Say what you like about Bernarr Macfadden, say all that his worst enemies might say, and all the lies and truths which are not here recorded, say it all, and then admit and confess that this magazine editor and publisher in the month of March, and in the year 1898,

seated at his desk, which was his editorial office, his business office, and all his other offices rolled into one second-hand piece of furniture; admit that this man, at the age of thirty, sitting here writing under one name after another the various articles for the next number of his tiny magazine—has come a long way, a strange way, even a brave and lonely way from that hotel, twenty years ago, where he emptied the slops and trembled at the death sentence he heard whispered upon him as he lay in his bed.

Thirty he was, in that year when the Maine was blown up, and America went to war with Spain. Thirty—and just starting. Thirty—selling an exerciser and publishing a little monthly pamphlet. Should the world expect much more from such as he? Study the lives of so many men and see how surprises spring from the most unexpected.

It was true that *Physical Culture Magazine* for the first little while was scarcely anything more than a circular for the exerciser. That was all anyone in the trade thought of it; no one knew it was a magazine except Bernarr Macfadden. He saw, not its few pages and its little text. He saw the book that was yet to be; he saw it clearly and distinctly and confidently. At no time did he ever entertain any fear that his project would fail. From the public platform, he had watched his audiences; in his various studios he had talked with his clients, and he knew that all human beings were interested in their health, once you looked beneath the

polite gaze they turned out upon the world. He knew they were waiting for his magazine, and he knew that he had started at last to bring it up, as fond parents bring up a child.

Yet even he was not prepared for its astonishing growth in those first years.

As if shod with seven league boots it plunged forward, rising from five thousand to forty thousand to one hundred thousand in less than two years. Macfadden was eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, walking, talking, existing only in his magazine. He was so busy that he did not have time to be awed at the success that was coming to him so readily and so bountifully. At first he did it all—and today, *en passant,* he still wishes he could do it all. No man was ever more in love with his work. He prodded the men who pounded the sidewalks in sunshine and rain to sell advertisements. He stimulated the distributors to give his magazine a more imposing display. He wrote his magazine from end to end; he answered all the mail; he wrote dunning letters to his creditors and answered dunning letters from his debtors; he read proof, and kept his books; he received all callers, made speeches at sporting events—he lived in a whirling atmosphere of ceaseless activity, all revolving around about the one thing, the magazine.

When the first issues would go out, and Macfadden beheld the daily stacks of mail that came in from all over the United States, praising this and criticizing

that, asking for an article on one subject, or advice on some physical ailment, hailing with joy the appearance of the publication, he knew that he had found his own gate into his own world, at last, finally, and with no further doubts. Here, in this work, all his desires and dreams and ambitions would be resolved into one coherent activity.

Those letters—how they filled him with thrills! With what labor and what joy he sat himself down personally to answer each one of them. Personally, did I say? And how otherwise? He was the whole staff in those days, from president to office boy.

His five-cent magazine made an impression from its very first issue. He was hitting hard, straight from the shoulder, with all the accumulated force and velocity of a man who has had a great deal to say for many, many years and has at last found the time and the place to say it. The articles in that first volume of *Physical Culture Magazine* tingle and burn with a furious kind of release; a crude, pulsating strength. They hit their readers straight in the solar plexus.

"Weakness is a crime! Don't be a criminal!"

That was being shouted at the people of America for the first time, at the close of a languishing era when anemia was fashionable. Macfadden was blowing through a brazen trumpet the call to come alive, to be strong, to rise up from weakness to a new buoyancy. The time was ripe for such a clarion call. Men

passing down the street saw that tiny magazine with its impudent tocsin; heard it and listened and paused.

One hundred thousand were listening to him; one hundred thousand were telling their friends that weakness was a crime and they shouldn't be criminals. And the more they listened to him, the harder Macfadden labored to give them the truth as he believed it to be, as they had never got it before from doctor or saint.

It is a curious study—that first year of *Physical Culture Magazine*. The twelve numbers bound are not so thick as one month's copy today. But a fire is in those pages. One turns them and often a smile arises at the naïvete of its pictures, its captions, its immense and serious eloquence. But it was genuine—the mark of the evangelist was stamped upon each phrase.

In the very first issue we find that the editor began a serial story with which we are already acquainted—it was entitled, "The Athlete's Conquest," with a subtitle, "The Romance of An Athlete," and under that, in quite naïve parentheses, the legend: (Revised). The story ran for many months, and meanwhile the magazine was presenting a series of articles, month after month, that were bound to attract attention.

Among those in the first year or so, 1898-1899, were:

"The Development of Great Muscular Vigor."

"Is Disease Necessarily an Accompaniment of Genius? Is Muscle Bad for the Brain?"

"Marriage of the Unfit."

"Controlled Parenthood—The Individual."

"The Murder of Children by Parental Ignorance."

"Some Practical Suggestions in Voice Culture."

"Alcohol Not a Food."

"Mr. Gladstone as an Athlete."

"Home Exercise for Little Tots."

"Dewey as a Devotee of Physical Culture."

"Methods of Physical Culture of Prominent Players" (including some very personal information about Julia Arthur, John Drew, Wilton Lackaye, Maurice Barrymore, Elsie DeWolf and others).

"Theodore Roosevelt, Rough Rider and Athlete."

"Paderewski on Strong Muscles in Piano Playing."

"Physical Weakness—Marital Unhappiness."

"Senator Depew on Physical Culture."

"Criminal Neglect in Our Educational Methods."

"Can the Highest Degree of Attainable Physical Perfection Be Acquired, if Absolute Continence Be Observed?"

Such was the spirit and scope of the magazine, even then. The program was getting consciously under way, and Macfadden was in his element in pushing it forward. He got every one who was prominent in his field to contribute; there is, for instance, a remarkable series of exercises by the famous Sandow. Another early and important contributor was Dr. Ella A. Jennings, who had formerly been editor of *Humanity and Health* and who took over the woman's depart-

ment, thus relieving Macfadden of some embarrassment.

Macfadden was lecturing as well as editing; often he held meetings at the Berklely Lyceum, which only old-timers will remember. It was on Forty-fourth Street, just west of Fifth Avenue. These meetings were for men only, and from the platform Macfadden spoke his mind far more frankly than he would dare in his magazine. Dr. Ella Jennings also conducted a few meetings for women.

And now, having launched his magazine and seen with what sturdy strength it was prospering, Macfadden decided on a bold and impetuous move.

It was still a five-cent paper, designed to sell a piece of merchandise. In plunging ahead and writing seriously on his own conception of Physical Culture, Macfadden had given freedom to his ambitions rather than advancing the sale of that piece of merchandise which was called an exerciser. As a good business man, one would hardly expect him to do such a thing. A good business man would have made the exerciser the moral of every tale that was told in the pages of the magazine. "I had a stiff back; I bought this exerciser; now my back isn't stiff!" That is the kind of policy that a good business man would have pursued in publishing the circular.

But Macfadden, from the very first, found it impossible to confine himself to such a policy. He was always forgetting to mention the exerciser, because

he knew how to cure the stiff back without the exerciser —simply by calisthenics. Yet, in spite of the fact that he was taking an honest, even an idealistic policy, instead of a commercial attitude, the magazine was prospering! This precipitated a grave and bold editional decision.

Before the first year was up, Macfadden had decided to throw the exerciser overboard!

From thenceforth, he resolved, his magazine was to exist in its own right, not for the exploitation of any merchandise, but for itself alone. It would carry only the message of health by natural means. It must earn its own way.

Now for this decision, say Macfadden's friends, he is entitled to the most sincere admiration. The exerciser was making money for him. The magazine was selling the exerciser. To discard it was to discard a certain income; in fact the major profits of the entire venture. Only a man who was more interested in a message than in money or who was exceptionally far-seeing, would take such a step so early in the game. Macfadden couldn't wait any longer. He was doing the thing that he loved, and the one fly in his ointment was an exerciser in which he no longer believed. By that I mean that he regarded his exercises as really of more value than any such artificial device.

It was the wisest move he yet had made. The exerciser was never missed. In the growing popularity of the magazine, the financial returns began to improve.

Macfadden was not getting rich but he had obtained by then all that he has ever really asked for himself—decent clothing, a room, and food. In spite of everything, that is about all he takes from life, even today, when he can have pretty much what he pleases.

In a very short time he had to delegate some of his work; to hire help. That was a new thrill. He who had sought for so many jobs was now giving work to others. Perhaps that is why Macfadden is one of the kindest and most generous employers in all New York today. There is not a man in all his immense establishment, no matter how humble his job, who cannot go to him and get an attentive and unhurried hearing at any time, if he feels he has not been rightly done by. Some of the Macfadden executives do not like this at all. They feel it is not good organization; it encourages their subordinates to go over their heads.

But Macfadden persists in this, because he is an employer with the employe's viewpoint. He has never forgotten one of the hundred jobs he had, or the bosses, who ordered him around; nor has he ever allowed himself to become just a part of an inhuman machine, as his own business grew more and more complicated. Perhaps it is bad organization for him to give a personal hearing to some little clerk, who should have proceeded through his departmental superior. But Macfadden sees the little clerk, just the same. His familiarity with the personal history and family affairs of his employes is astonishing. Just as

astonishing, too, is his freedom from mawkish sympathy. The little clerk to whom he gives free audience is just as likely to receive a more emphatic reprimand from him than he would ever have got from his own boss. Macfadden is impartial and judicious; he can be severe without kindness; and he can be most kind and charitable without being a fool.

This habit of his began, of course, with his first employe, when *Physical Culture* began to grow, and he cast out the exerciser and began to publish a magazine in which he believed with his whole heart and soul. Not until he had done this did he feel entirely free, and not until he had done this did the magazine really begin to flourish. Then more employes were needed.

For ten dollars a month, Macfadden had hired desk room in a real estate office, and on that desk he had begun the magazine. Note how far he had gone in a year! At the end of that year he had his own office, with three desks beside his own. That was the time when O. J. Elder, now advertising director of Macfadden Publications, Inc., came to work for Bernarr Macfadden, and also Charles Mendel, who has been the production manager of the magazines for so many years, and who knows the mechanical problems of the business from the inside out. The staff was beginning—three employes at the end of the year. At the end of the second year, there was a suite of three offices, and twenty desks. Twelve months later—the

third year of the magazine—he had eight offices, with fifty employes, and was advertising for more.

With some reason, then, Macfadden felt that *Physical Culture Magazine* was safely launched, and he next decided to issue a companion publication for women only. For it he selected at first the definite but cumbersome title, *Woman's Physical Development.* Very quickly he realized his mistake there, and changed it to *Beauty and Health.*

This, too, prospered—but its success was its own undoing. In a short time, Macfadden had built up the circulation of *Beauty and Health* to the quite astonishing total of eighty thousand a month. But at that time the difficulties of continuing it were practically insuperable. Authors who could write for the two magazines were almost impossible to find. Macfadden was still writing the bulk of both journals. The advertising staff found it difficult to serve two masters. Eventually, Macfadden combined the two publications, and ever since then *Physical Culture Magazine* has had an appeal for women equal to its interest for men. This combination brought a new breath of life to the magazine; its accumulated impetus was now astonishing.

And so, for the first time, the nation at large began to take notice of Bernarr Macfadden.

People were talking. Of course they were talking, for his radical little *Physical Culture Magazine* was saying things that had never been said before. It was

taking its readers by the shoulders and shaking them into a realization that health is the most precious wealth in all the world, and reminding them how they were squandering that wealth with all the mad folly of the prodigal son. The magazine was hitting hard at some of the crying national evils of that day; it was starting bonfires on many private back-lots and the glare of the fires thus lighted was bringing its editor into prominence.

Those critics of Macfadden who today write learned articles about him forget that he was a crusader for their benefit at a time when most of them were getting ready to go to school. This is the time and this is the place to tell of these courageous fights that Macfadden has waged; fights against entrenched and powerful interests, and often he fought them quite alone.

Macfadden's first crusade that had results of truly national importance was against the golden traffic in patent medicines.

If you ask the average student of latter-day American history about the downfall of the patent medicine, he will tell you, generally, that it was all due to *Collier's Weekly* and the *Ladies Home Journal.* Or perhaps he will guess vaguely that the American Medical Association put the nostrumeers out of business.

Both answers are wrong. A large part of the credit belongs to Bernarr Macfadden. Although the credit is

seldom given to him, it was a signal service which he rendered the American public.

Anyone who remembers the beginnings of our present century—what Mark Sullivan calls "Our Times"—remembers the old patent medicine advertisements. I do not believe there were many newspapers in the United States too virtuous to accept their voluminous advertising. They paid well for it, they used great quantities of space, and whether their stupendous claims to healing virtues were based on fact or not never seemed to trouble the newspaper proprietors. Poor people everywhere bought these syrups and pills in the pathetic belief that in them were compounded some magic solvents that would cure miraculously. No ill was too obscure for healing, in one bottle, according to their flambouyant advertisements. Each medicine was advertised to cure all the aches that human flesh is heir to. The same nostrum was an infallible remedy for toe-ache, liver complaint, diabetes, scrofula, "consumption" and housemaid's knee. If you were constipated, or if you had diarrhea, take this medicine and you would get well. Charlatans and quack-salvers covered the walls of buildings with their lying promises to the sick and the dying. The philtres of Cagliostro were as nothing compared to the extravagant claims made for these modern witch potions. For example, who can ever forget the heroic likeness of that grave-faced Dr. Munyon? His half-figure ornamented many of the blank brick walls of the land. There he stood,

with a face like a cathedral dean, eyebrows knit, his piercing glance directed straight at you, his finger uplifted, while he cried in type two feet high, "There is hope!"

The hope was, of course, that you would buy his medicine.

Some of these medicines were nauseous doses that contained nothing more valuable than a violent purgative. Their vendors ranged anywhere from the itinerant fakir with his cheap vaudeville show to the corner drugstore. The "medicine man" was a mountebank who traveled from town to town, exhibited a Punch and Judy show, and sold his bottles of tonic. He made the medicine in wash-tubs at a dollar a tubfull, and sold it in bottles at a dollar a bottle. Other such medicines were put up in elaborate packages, and displayed on the shelves of drugstores and in their windows from one end of the country to another. I think it was proved that some of these contained narcotic drugs; certainly a number of them contained alcohol and were nothing more nor less than whiskies with a medicinal flavor. These were particularly popular in local option territories and were the early attempts of Americans to outwit the rising tide of alcoholic prohibition.

The testimonials offered in support of these quack remedies were truly astonishing. United States Senators, who were seldom adverse to publicity, wrote letters telling how a certain remedy had made of them

new men. They attributed all their success in public office to this single agency, this health-giving medicine, this wonderful, wonderful tonic.

Here was an infamous situation. Macfadden felt he had the only genuine patent medicine. He called it physical culture and it could stand any analysis that the ingenuity of man could devise. He was sure he had the real goods. These patent medicine people were dangerous. He saw that clearly, even though with great anger.

It was then that Bernarr Macfadden dealt the death blow to the patent medicine business.

When he first attacked them, in the pages of the magazine, it looked as if he were tilting his lance against an enemy that would lay him low before he could make one stab at their impenetrable armor of gold. For many reasons, it looked like a hopeless fight. That may sound strange today, when the battle is won, and practically forgotten, but all this was more than a quarter of a century ago.

Remember that in those days, the patent medicine was a respectable institution. Even the medical profession felt a kind of comraderie with it; there were countless endorsements for the stuff from reputable physicians. In this connection, it is only fair to add that the ethics of the medical profession then was not so clearly defined as today. It is also only fair to continue that Macfadden helped the medical profession clarify that definition.

The thing began first with a temptation. Macfadden was tempted of the patent medicine devil. That is to say, one of them offered an advertisement to one of his solicitors. Macfadden turned down the contract angrily, and then it suddenly occurred to him that the time had come when these people should be driven out of business.

So he began to drive them out of business. It was as simple and as incredible as that. In his magazines he began to tell the truth about them. He called their advertisements lies. He branded them all as charlatans and thieves, selling false hopes and bitter disappointments to poor and ignorant people. He named names most valiantly. With an impetuousity and violence that was nothing short of volcanic, he denied the therapeutic blessings of Old Doc Bunkum's malt concoctions. He even questioned the ancient and honorable claims of Mother Cheatem's special preparations. He called upon the newspapers to follow his humble example and refuse their unquestionably false and misleading advertising.

The newspapers heard him not at all.

Now what was the reaction of the patent medicine manufacturers to Macfadden's unceasing invective against them, month after month? It was a response wholly natural and characteristic. Being accustomed to insincerity among themselves they did not believe for a moment that this young wild man let loose in their private preserves could possibly be sincere. Cer-

tainly not! They winked knowingly at each other over their conference tables and felt entirely assured that they knew how to handle this man Macfadden. He was a smart man all right; they admitted that. He knew his business. They were sure Macfadden was holding them up for money—they asked themselves, wasn't his motive as plain as the long nose on the face of old Doc Munyon? Of course it was! They had no doubts about it at all.

And with the characteristic cunning of all such gentry, the patent medicine men began to consider how they could make an alliance with this Macfadden. He was young, he was full of fire. Perhaps they could use him. He might go far. Better to join with him than to fight against him—the man had a loud voice and could say, nay, had said, hard things. Did he want their advertising? They would give him all he wanted and more. Or perhaps he wanted a slice of their profits? Very well, then; if he forced them to it, they might even offer him a small partnership, and thus they could control a magazine that was becoming an important organ for the public health. How fine that would be, after all, for the patent medicine men!

Thus they took counsel together, these heads of the patent medicine business. Old Doc Skinner and old Doc Bunkum and Old Doc Hokum would add a new confederate in their thuggery gang—and if he wanted to call himself old Doc Macfadden, and put *his* finger up above *his* head, why, what objections should they

All the fire and enthusiasm and kindliness that have marked his subsequent life, are plainly evident in Macfadden's face thirty and more years ago.

Bernarr Macfadden's most recent interest is in flying.

raise to that? The man had a magazine; he was dangerous!

These fellows in the nostrum game were well organized in those days. They had their own private little trust, and it brought them in millions of dollars every year. Their readiness to meet Macfadden more than half-way was no insignificant temptation,, to a young publisher. If Bernarr Macfadden had been the money-seeking opportunist that his enemies have time and time again tried to make out, here, certainly, was his opportunity!

Macfadden was approached. One day, he was figuratively taken unto his high hill and shown the world which would be made his, if he would only bow down before the god of poison drugs, whose emissary was there to buy his conscience.

The refusal of Macfadden, having thus been approached, was incomprehensible to the patent medicine manufacturers. What in God's name did the man want? Why wouldn't he join them? Did he think he could run his magazine and make a profit by such monthly muck-raking as he was now engaged in? Nobody was safe from his onslaughts. He said their medicines were all fakes. He said as much and more about the widely advertised "electric belts." What was the matter with him?

Macfadden made no reply except to continue his campaign. Already the effect of it was being felt. People would go into the drugstores with copies of

Physical Culture Magazine in their hands, and they would ask the druggist to explain why he carried such poisonous stuff—and why he sold it to his customers. Even then the patent medicine business was beginning to suffer.

Naturally, it is not to be supposed that a magazine of the size and standing which *Physical Culture* then occupied could have itself alone undermined and destroyed such a huge and profitable business as this. No one has ever made such a claim. But Macfadden began that patent medicine war; he was the first to protest, and he did it at an immense financial sacrifice. In the face of great temptations, he utterly and finally refused to compromise.

It is perfectly true that those two great and firmly established magazines, *Collier's Weekly* and the *Ladies Home Journal,* did also take up the cudgels courageously in the same cause. It took courage for them to get into the fight, and they accomplished a great deal more and all honor should be accorded them for it. But they did not begin the campaign; that belongs clearly and unmistakably to the man who had grown up to hate all shams of healing; the man who was the apostle of natural methods, to Macfadden and his magazine.

He was soon to find that he had attacked a dangerous and devious enemy. Once they learned they could not join hands with him, the old docs, the patent medicine men, set out vigorously to destroy him. And they

tried to destroy him by the same means that they had tried to capture him—by money.

Even in those early days the advertising agencies were powerful. One agency would advise the placement and devise the copy and buy the space for many advertisers. Naturally the agencies were very polite to such important clients as the patent medicine men. So it soon came to pass that some medicine men went to the advertising agencies and complained against Macfadden. *Physical Culture Magazine* was trying to drive them out of business, the patent medicine men bitterly complained. Were the agencies going to support such an influence—by putting advertising into *Physical Culture Magazine?* The patent medicine men hoped not. Otherwise they would have to go to some other agency—that would stand by its clients. At this news, the advertising agencies were aghast. If Macfadden was trying to hurt the patent medicine men, he must be mad! They couldn't understand it. But they would stop him. They were certain they had the upper hand of Macfadden. He couldn't exist without the advertising they placed in his magazine—they felt certain of that. Very well; they would go to him and tell him he would have to cut out his attacks on these kindly benefactors of the human race known as patent medicine men. They were sure he would obey them. If he didn't, he would lose, then and there, on the spot, forever and ever and the day after, the biggest part of his advertising, because these same agency men

controlled it. The advertising agency men smiled at the patent medicine men. The old docs needn't worry any more. Just give the agency men ten minutes alone with Mr. Macfadden and the patent medicine war would be over for good and all.

Macfadden chased them out of his office, and the war went merrily on.

I do not know when Mr. Bok or Mr. Collier got hold of the same idea. It was a brave war for them to get into. They had much more advertising to protect than ever Macfadden had. And you may be sure the old docs used the same coercive tactics on them. To their great praise it should be said that they were just as firm in their stand as Macfadden was in his. Macfadden started the war and they finished it.

Of course the tactics employed against Macfadden failed in everything, except in advancing his popularity. He had such an uncomfortable habit of laying all the facts before his readers. He told them plainly just what the patent medicine men were trying to do to him, and if anything clinched his case in the public mind that did. For his stand in this matter they admired him tremendously. His circulation grew, and in a little while, advertisers were glad to get back into his pages. Meanwhile, the agencies were finding it less and less necessary to be polite to the old docs Skinnem, Bunkum and Hokum, et al. The victory over the patent medicine gang was not gained for many

years and meanwhile *Physical Culture Magazine* was enjoying a great and growing prosperity and respect.

Now here was an eminent public service which Bernarr Macfadden performed. It is by no means the most important of his accomplishments for the public welfare, but it is a specific case. Yet his enemies attack him for insincerity. Lest the advertising persecution which I have described seem to be an invention, let me add that such tactics are practiced even today by advertising agencies. At this statement, there may be an indignant protest, but it is true. One of the largest agencies in the land refuses to buy space in one certain group of publications, because its proprietor disagrees with the editorial policy of those publications. Attempted intimidation by advertisers of editors, of course, is as old as the counting office. It is not an exaggeration to say that Macfadden is the most independent large publisher in America. The advertising office has practically no influence over the editorial policies of the Macfadden Publications. It is largely because of this that their readers believe in their honesty. Macfadden may be wrong about many things, but his worst enemy cannot maintain that his opinions are for sale. Anyone familiar with publishing conditions in America knows that is rare enough to be mentioned here.

This patent medicine war, let me repeat, was but one of the important battles in which Macfadden engaged. I have reserved for a special chapter the story

of his rebellion against the orthodox medical profession. For the present let me say, merely, that simultaneously with his attack on nostrums he was fighting with all the impassioned zeal of the heretic against Established Medicine. It is a story that can stand alone, and be judged alone, by every thinking human being who knows that to each of us comes an hour when a doctor holds our life in his keeping—and that, therefore, the competence of the physician is of supreme importance to us all. There were other evils against which he waged a daring fight, only to be called a fanatic and a fool for his pains, in the beginning; only to see his ideas become accepted all over the world a few years later.

One of the most amusing and significant of these was his fight against the corset.

To Macfadden, a corset is a far greater insult than a Turkish flag to a bull. He regards it as the invention of the devil himself. His ideas on physical culture were, as you must have observed, far-reaching; they concerned clothes as well as diet, ideas as well as exercise. He saw in the corset a contrivance that was despoiling American womanhood not only of all natural charm and allurement, but also of its vital functions—a devilish and inhuman thing, boned and corded and ribbed, full of national catastrophe.

In fervent language, Macfadden wrote one furious editorial after another, reviling the corset. Few other voices had yet been heard against such a respectable

garment. Macfadden declared that the corset compressed the vital organs to such a construction as materially to impair their functional activities. Further than that, he asserted that by weakening the muscles the corset destroyed the shape of the figure and that it was the principal cause of what the patent medicine advertisements called "female weakness."

With a Gargantuan humor he went after the infernal thing. He reproduced pictures of "lady tennis players" and "lady hockey players," languidly wielding their rackets and sticks, and gasping for air. One especially bitter cartoon showed one such player disrobed, her poor body hideously twisted by the corset torture jacket.

It was the inherent right of every woman, declared Macfadden, to build up her body by gymnastics, with the same freedom and enthusiasm as men. But how could they do it in corsets? It was Macfadden's announced determination to rid the sex of corsets and he feels that he did it.

How curious it does seem now, that the medical profession had never engaged in such a campaign! We read the witty articles of that literary physician, Dr. Morris Fishbein, the mouthpiece of his organized profession. He tells us with great gusto of all the medical follies; among them he even names physical culture. But how much, how very much, he does not name!

The profession left it largely to Bernarr Macfadden

to attack the corset. And Macfadden undertook the assignment full joyously. The "C. B." corset he called the "Curse of Beauty." In those days Macfadden had spent a lot of time at the Art Students League on Fifty-seventh Street. There he had imbibed a great respect for the Greek ideal of beauty. The Venus de Milo did not wear a corset. Why, he asked, should the American Venus have one? Why not *grow* such a figure? In one editorial he said:

"We hate the corset because it comes in the guise of a friend and it ends by being the most terrible enemy to health, to happiness, and to beauty that woman comes in contact with during her entire life. It makes her old when she should be in the prime and glory of superb womanhood. It has created and perpetuated the false deduction that the duties of maternity necessarily destroy a woman's figure. Duties of this character only destroy a woman's figure when she has so weakened herself by corsets that any debilitating influence would produce a similar result. How a woman can wear a support for her bust from childhood and then have the incomprehensible audacity to expect it to remain round, firm, and to maintain its proper position until advanced age is more than the writer can understand. The muscles which hold the bust in proper form are necessarily greatly weakened by this support that takes their place, and when the first debilitating influence of any kind appears, their firmness and symmetry naturally disappear.

"At thirteen or fourteen the corset begins its stifling and demoralizing influence, physically, mentally and morally. It crushes in on the great vital centers at the waist line, displacing, weakening, and deforming. The bones of the corset prevent the body from bending at the waist, hence these muscles and the entire abdominal region gradually deteriorate in vigor.

"We intend to fight the corset curse to the bitter end, and if women will persist in debilitating their bodies and destroy their womanhood by its embrace, we will see that the man who marries their kind will know the terrible risk he is taking."

The newspapers, with a curious disregard of their corset advertisers, fell upon this campaign with whooping headlines of delight. There was something funny, and perhaps a little dashing, about a corset discussion. The affair got into the hands of the newspaper funny men, and once that happens to anything, its success is more promising. The funny men of America laughed Henry Ford into the estate of a billionaire. They laughed at the anti-corset campaign and soon people began to ask their doctors if corsets were really harmful.

One wonders what the doctors answered. If they answered yes, there might have been another question: "Why, doctor, didn't you tell me about it before? Why did you leave it to Mr. Macfadden to tell me?"

But, then, the doctors have left it to Mr. Macfadden to tell their patients so many things!

At all events, the anti-corset war was won—not immediately but by easily recognizable stages. "Health corsets" began to appear, like the first harbingers of the new spring. The manufacturers had been listening to their retailers and their retailers had been listening to their customers and their customers had been listening to Macfadden. The founder of *Physical Culture* lived to attend the funeral of the garment he regarded with such Olympian disdain.

Macfadden warred, as well, against tobacco and against liquor. The full extent of his feelings against these narcotics is difficult to describe. If you can imagine the owner of a precious golden vase, protesting against someone pouring a concoction of formaldehyde, carbolic acid and cyanide of potassium into its graceful chalice, you may feel something of his attitude.

To Macfadden, the human body is far more precious than any golden cup, though it were turned and spun under the hands of Cellini himself. He looks upon the body with a religious reverence, and he cannot bear to see it defiled. He knows that alcohol and tobacco are harmful to the health of the human body. So does any man or woman with the simple capacity to reason. Therefore he is uncompromisingly opposed to narcotics. For nearly half a century he has attacked them, in season and out, in his magazine.

But Macfadden is opposed to prohibition.

I pause here, amazed at his critics. Here is a liber-

alism of spirit for which our self-appointed leaders of liberalism have been praying, yet they would be the first to cry down this very practical and pertinent liberalism. I have read, for instance, what Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard had to say about Macfadden in the *Atlantic Monthly,* and by that screed I was very much entertained. Further, I have heard Mr. Villard from the platform on much the same subject; the same Mr. Villard who is the editor of the liberal *Nation.* And, as I said, I pause, amazed.

The one plaint of Mr. Villard and his band of liberals who want to save the United States from the bugaboos, is that the forces of reaction are again in power; that they are intolerant, illiberal and unintelligent, and in control of the masses. Yet Macfadden is the only American liberal who has the ear of the masses. Mr. Villard's magazine voice reaches almost entirely those who already believe in his program. Macfadden has a voice that reverberates all over the land—and Macfadden has a tolerance which Mr. Villard should greatly admire. Macfadden doesn't like liquor. Perhaps Mr. Villard does—but Mr. Macfadden doesn't want to take Mr. Villard's liquor away from him. All Macfadden wants is the right to say what he thinks about liquor. And that right the tolerant liberals are wanting to deny him. This is no more than a fact, for one liberal has said that he would like to close down Mr. Macfadden and all his works.

If Mr. Macfadden were the dangerous force which

some of these liberals declare him to be, then one would expect to find him lined up with all the intolerant reactionaries who wanted to force prohibition on a public that did not and does not believe in it. Macfadden hated and opposed such a course just as violently as he hated and warned men against liquor and tobacco. He would as soon have advocated a constitutional amendment compelling every man, woman, and child to take morning exercises, go on two meals a day and abide otherwise by the doctrines of physical culture, as to have supported the dry movement.

Here, particularly, in his long continued fight against narcotics of all kinds, Macfadden has displayed that civilized reasonableness which many liberals exalt and few possess. He showed a level-headed quality, a penetration, a notable understanding of human nature. Macfadden believed in education, not in legislation, in all such matters, and said so in his magazine. He has dedicated a lifetime to the education of people in the care of their own bodies. When the strength and energy of his own convictions on any subject are considered, and particularly on narcotics, and his fighting capacity is remembered, this liberal attitude becomes a curious example of self-discipline, of civilized reticence which all liberals might consider at their leisure.

CHAPTER V

Mr. Macfadden and the Doctors

For more than thirty years, the medical profession has regarded Bernarr Macfadden as its most dangerous enemy.

Recently I asked one of the most enlightened physicians in New York City:

"What have you got against Bernarr Macfadden?"

I thought the good physician would perish there before my very eyes, from sheer apoplexy.

"Macfadden!" he exclaimed. "Bernarr Macfadden? Why, he is a national danger!"

"Why?" I persisted.

The doctor implored the ceiling of his office with a wide sweep of his hands; his eyes, behind professional glasses, entreated highest heaven to hear the folly of my question.

"Why?" he repeated. "Why? Simply enough, of course. The man doesn't know anything about what he is talking about, and yet he tries to take the patients right out of the doctors' offices and delude them with a lot of charlatanry. Macfadden even urges them to resist vaccination, and that, sir, you ought to know, is a terrible thing for any man to do. Vaccination is one of the greatest discoveries of the age. Yet Macfadden

opposes it. And he tries to tell people how to get well without expert medical treatment. His ideas are childish, ignorant, stupid and utterly worthless."

"How do you know all that?"

"Everybody knows that," the doctor answered with some heat.

"But do you know it?" I insisted. "Have you read any of his books?"

"My time is too valuable."

"Have you read his magazine?"

"I would not let a copy come in my office."

"Then how can you know all these things? Come! Give me a reasonable answer."

The doctor smiled at me triumphantly.

"Very well, I will. I am a regular member of my profession. That is to say, I belong to my county medical society, and my state medical society and our national organization—the American Medical Association. *They* tell us about Macfadden. I am too busy a man to bother with such things. But our organization has its committees and it is their business to find out and report to us and that's how I know about Macfadden."

"Just hearsay?"

"Not hearsay—an official report from our organization."

I said no more, for the doctor had made the point which I want to make here. Macfadden has no quarrel with doctors, all other reports to the contrary. He

respects the medical profession, is profoundly aware of its many great contributions to human progress and knowledge, and among his friends numbers some of its most conspicuous practitioners.

Yet, for the last thirty years, in season and out, he has been engaged in a war with organized medicine.

How reconcile two such divergent attitudes?

The answer is simple enough, and was stated clearly and succinctly by the doctor whom I have just quoted. Macfadden believes, as many physicians assert, that organized medicine has become a formidable trust, that its power over the individual physician is almost despotic, that its spirit is often wholly commercial, and that it has developed an immense political lobby, and is working in state and county legislatures, in the House of Representatives and the United States Senate with the same weapons and in the same spirit as the Anti-Saloon League, and for even more ambitious ends.

Thus it is against what he calls the medical trust that Macfadden has taken his stand, and he has taken it for a perfectly understandable reason. He is not a mere muck-raker, seeking a new sensation with which to build circulation for his magazine. He is a prophet of the gospel of physical culture, and he declares he has found everywhere the hand of the medical trust, trying to take away the simple truth from the people and instead put a mystic prescription in their hands. He fights the "trust" because he believes it to be anti-social, and against the interests of human health.

It is also true that Macfadden believes that the methods of many doctors are wrong, and that his own natural methods are better. He has seen the doctors come around to his own way of thinking, years afterward, in many cases. But here is no cause for hard feelings between well-intentioned men. If Macfadden gets results, the doctors should be glad to examine his claims and give them a fair trial. Macfadden's physical culture program has never had a fair and official examination by the medical profession.

On the other hand, if what the doctors said about Macfadden were true, then something ought to be done about it, for the protection of the large public which trusts him implicitly.

Again, if Macfadden is right, about the grip of the medical trust, then there should be prompt action to remove such a terrible power from the hands of such a financially interested group of men.

The question, therefore, is one of right and wrong; of fact. You cannot expect a wholly fair statement of the case from either side, for Macfadden has suffered too much from the doctors ever to be entirely fair to them, and certainly the doctors cannot look at him or his publications without blood in their eyes.

Certainly, no impartial judgment can be expected here, where I am attempting no more than to tell a straight-forward story of a man's career, and to present his views, as clearly and definitely as I know how to do.

But it should be possible for me, at least to throw

some light on Macfadden's side of the question and to show how a man can hold such radical opinions without being stupid, ignorant, or venal.

For a non-medical man to assail the authority of a medical man seems to challenge the common sense of our American method and habit of thinking. There is no basic reason why it should seem foolish, but for many excellent reasons it does, just the same. The doctor stands close to the priest in superstitious respect. There clings to the physician some of the old halo that glowed round the tribal witch-doctor. We feel that after all a doctor is a little set apart from the rest of humanity. His knowledge is profound, we feel sure; his understanding perfect; we do not question him, for we feel he must know, or the state would never have put such great power into his hands. If he gives us medicine, we feel we should take it without asking of what it is made, for such information would mean nothing to us anyhow. The doctor knows! We don't know! Therefore, we don't question the doctor; we do just what he tells us to do, leaving our health, even our life, in his hands. Meanwhile we look at him with an awe that is almost a superstition.

Now, according to Macfadden, the mistake lies in assuming that the doctor really knows. Macfadden has found out to his own satisfaction that the doctor doesn't know, and he thinks the reason the American Medical Association would like to hush him up, is because they don't want that information spread abroad.

It is true that Macfadden has excellent support for his position. Sir William Osler, one of the great doctors of all time, was just as emphatic in advertising the ignorance of his own profession. He said that only forty-nine per cent of all the diagnoses of physicians were correct! Macfadden has never made a more extreme statement.

All this, of course, is a hard saying. We, of the common people, do not want to lose confidence in our doctors. Where else shall we turn, then, if not to the medical profession? If we get sick, we want a doctor, as much for our peace of mind as for the ailment itself. Macfadden tells you your own body will cure itself, if you will give it a chance. The doctors say that such a man is dangerous!

For thirty years they have been saying this, and Macfadden replies that in those thirty years the medical profession has announced many great discoveries, only to find later they were failures and retract them. Macfadden reminds them that he has never had to retract his own foundation, which is that the body will heal itself, if given a chance.

To give in clear and concise form all of that system of Physical Culture for which he has striven so intensely within the compass of a few pages is, naturally, not possible. For thirty years Macfadden has been telling it in his magazine and his books and his thousands of lectures. All I can hope to do is to state his case generally, with a few specific instances; the reader

who desires more complete information may seek it at its source.

Macfadden sees the body as a living organism endowed with the power of self-readjustment when free from interference and foreign restrictions. His entire study has been concentrated on the problem of finding how to free the body from anything that will interfere with its orderly activities in running itself; to give it the opportunity to develop and function properly.

At the foundation of the whole problem he places food.

The keystone of Macfadden's entire system is diet and fasting. When he first began to urge fasting some members of the medical profession denounced the principle as dangerous, absurd, and thoroughly unscientific. Today they see that some careful investigators, after the most searching experiment, have confirmed Macfadden's theories about fasting, and the principle is even taking its place in the daily practice of some physicians. His dietic ideas have long ago received general acceptance.

It is Macfadden's idea that the energies of the body are largely concentrated on digesting unnecessary food, making it impossible for those energies to be used for the revitalization and renewal of vital functions. If one eats less, the body will have more time to take care of its repairs. Further, he maintains that we need much less food than is the common habit of the day, and that some of the favorite foods of the public are

actually harmful to the body. White flour and its products, for instance, he regards as a slow and deadly poison, and the growth of the whole-wheat bread idea in the United States may be traced directly to his energetic propaganda.

Thus it is fair enough to say that Macfadden places eating at the foundation of his system of health. Don't eat so much, and eat the right food, and your body will be able constantly to restore itself—that may be stated as the first of his principles. Then, when something goes wrong, go on a fast. If you have a cold, he tells you a fast will cure it in a few days. The doctors, many of them, have said this was ridiculous, and yet Macfadden insists anyone can demonstrate the truth of it for himself. A twenty-four-hour fast, he says, will cure most ordinary colds, as a trial will demonstrate. But it should be made plain here that this is not to be considered as an instruction. There is more to fasting than merely not eating. One must know how to break a fast, how much water to drink, during a fast, and many such things. I have no intention to do anything more than merely state the principles of a system; anyone wishing to experiment must read and acquaint himself with full details before trying these methods upon himself.

One need not point out that the idea of fasting is very ancient; that like most elemental ideas, it is imbedded in the religious literature, the lore and legend of many peoples. What is more important are a few

recent experiments by the very type of scientists who would be the first to look upon Macfadden as an irresponsible, hair-brained fanatic.

One man in a Western University made a truly amazing experiment. He used for the purpose a kind of insect, the life of which was only twenty-four hours. He procured some of these insects and isolated them, where they could obtain no food. To his amazement he discovered that instead of quickly starving, *they lived for fifteen days.* Under normal conditions they ate themselves to death in twenty-four hours, but when they were starved, their life-span was lengthened fifteen hundred per cent. To a born optimist, it might seem that man, if he but knew how to do it, could break the Methuselah record and live for more than a thousand years. And this is one of Macfadden's great quests; the secret of everlasting youth, and he is positive he has found it in fasting.

The obvious retort to that insect experiment is that human beings are not insects, and that regardless of whether the bugs lived or died, a man must have his good nourishment.

Of course, the old idea of quick starvation is already exploded, even as a popular fallacy. Not so long ago, people believed that without food they would die in three or four days. Now they know that such an idea is ridiculous. The hunger strike of prisoners showed that many people could fast a month without ill effects.

Macfadden and many of his disciples think nothing of fasting from three days to three weeks.

Things equally strange have been demonstrated, not only by Bernarr Macfadden, but by medical men, by scientists, whose professional standing is above question. I refer now particularly to the experiments conducted in a class of the University of Chicago, several years ago. They received widespread prominence at the time. Young men and women students decided to live without food for a week. In that time they went to their classes, they engaged in their usual sports, they lived exactly the same routine as before—and their mental alertness was so much greater that their progress in their school work was cited as remarkable. Time and time again, this experiment was tried, with unvarying success.

To Macfadden, all this was nothing new. Throughout his career he had used his body as a laboratory and a week's fast was nothing unusual. Not so long ago, he sponsored the most amazing example of a fast-test in all the history of such research. That was when George Hassler Johnston, a young man in his employ, walked all the way from Chicago to Pittsburgh, a distance of five hundred miles over the mountains, in two weeks' time, *and in all those two weeks the young man did not eat a spoonful of food.* All that went through his mouth was water. And Johnston emerged from the test, vital, buoyant, lithe and healthy as a savage, a strange lesson to doubting mankind.

One would certainly think that organized medicine would be immensely interested in such a test as that. One would expect the doctors to make some study of the case. It might even make an article for the literary Dr. Fishbein. And one cannot wonder at Mr. Macfadden's attitude, when such an heroic experiment is ignored by the very group of men to whom it should seem most important.

That belief in fasting that Macfadden had acquired in the long-ago days when he was wrestling with George Baptiste, he carried into his magazine with an intense and dramatic conviction.

"I firmly believe," he wrote in one of the early issues of *Physical Culture Magazine,* "that a man can live and maintain his weight and strength on five cents a day. To demonstrate this, I propose to live on that amount daily here in New York for one month."

While his business interests did not permit him to complete the experiment, he did continue it for three weeks, and the total quantity of food that he ate during that time was as follows:

1 pound of crushed oats	.03
Water cress	.05
3 pounds white beans	.15
2 pounds red kidney beans	.10
Three pounds rice	.19
3 pounds dried peas	.12
2 pounds cornmeal	.05
Ten apples	.10
6 turnips	.05
Total	.84

For three weeks he had lived on eighty-four cents. At its conclusion, Macfadden was hale and hearty and full of his usual energy, and the experiment attracted a great deal of attention.

From what I have said, it may seem that fasting is, after all, a harmless idea, and one may well wonder what caused all the excitement about it. What has aroused the wrath of the medical profession against fasting is the sweeping claims that Macfadden makes for its performance. He maintains that fasting will cure the diseases that have most baffled the best medical minds of the day.

Macfadden contends that fasting will help and generally cure the following diseases:

Asthma
Biliousness
Bladder Disease
Bronchitis
Catarrh
Constipation
Coughs and Colds
Diabetes
Diseases of the Prostate Gland
Diseases of the Rectum
Diseases of Women
Dyspepsia
Emaciation
Epilepsy
Ear Troubles
Eye Troubles
Headache
Heart Disease
Insomnia
Impotency
Kidney Disease
Liver Disease
Neurasthenia
Obesity
Paralysis
Rheumatism
Skin Diseases
Stomach Diseases
Vital Depletion
Youthful Errors

Is it any wonder the doctors felt outraged?

And isn't it odd that they neglected to try some simple experiments, just to prove how wrong Macfadden was?

An early picture of Macfadden, showing his method of relaxing from the strenuous activities of building the magazine and carving out a career.

Macfadden on one of his barefoot walks.

To make matters worse, Macfadden declared that by fasting, he could cure syphilis and he could cure cancer!

Can you imagine the doctors' state of mind on hearing that?

When Bernarr Macfadden declares that he has cured syphilis and cancer by fasting and milk diet, the doctors tear their hair. To them such statements sound simply idiotic. Yet I can find no record where they have actually experimented along Macfadden's lines—while he has conducted hundreds of such experiments.

Why treat a syphilitic with fasting?

Macfadden will explain it to you very simply. The minute that food is withheld from the body, the system begins to eat up its own superfluous tissue. It devours the useless fat, and the wasted portions where disease is ravaging the body. It actually selects the diseased portions, says Macfadden. Thus, while a patient is getting thinner during the fast, what he is really losing is not good flesh, but the disease from which he is suffering. That treatment is continued until the patient has lost a great deal of weight. Then the milk diet is applied, according to a system that has been most carefully worked out.

What does it matter if the physicians do say this is unscientific nonsense? The French have a saying, *"Il marche!"*—it works. Macfadden's cases are extremely convincing. He can take you today into the homes of men who came to him, supposedly dying from syphilis,

and who, without any chemicals except milk, found their way back to health. More, without any subsequent treatment of any kind, they have married, and raised families of strong, virile children.

I cannot pass judgment on such matters. I am merely stating Mr. Macfadden's side of the case. But I must agree with him that the medical profession owes it to humanity to seek out the truth, no matter what its source; to find out if he has done these things or if he has not.

Herbert Spencer truly said, "There is no bar to human progress like contempt prior to examination."

It will have been noticed that in his course of treatment after fasting Macfadden laid emphasis on the curative value of milk. Here again is one of the most significant of the foundation stones in his system.

To him milk is a greater miracle than any manna falling from the skies. He considers it a perfect food; for years he has experimented with it on himself and on hundreds of patients; he has worked out the value of its use as the sole food of the body for long periods of time, and also in combination with other foods. He has even evolved a special technique for swallowing the milk, patterned after the lip movements of babies, sucking at the breast. As a curative agent, a body-builder, Macfadden ranks milk as the first food, the first tonic, the one and only decent patent medicine in the world.

It is not necessary, of course, to dwell on Macfad-

den's belief in exercise. He has devised countless routines, with and without dumbbells, Indian clubs, and the like; exercises to develop every muscle and organ of the body, and to add general strength and vigor to the whole. The end of it all, with him now, I believe, is a settled conviction that walking—long walks, persisted in, day after day—will do more for the system than any other single form of exercise. That is why he takes those long hikes in from his home.

Diet and fasting and exercise, plus a well-worked system of bathing and of exposing the body to the rays of the sun—these are the cardinal factors of Macfadden's system of physical culture.

That system is all embracing, literally encompassing the body from head to foot. One of the best selling books in America, although you may never have heard even its name, is "Hair Culture," by Bernarr Macfadden. There is another on "Foot Troubles." And nearly a score of others in between.

The story of his hair book is amusing. Macfadden nearly went bald when he was twenty-six years old. He evolved his hair culture system as a part of his complete scheme of physical education. His hair began to fall out rapidly, and he stared at his comb in dismay.

How could his fine and ambitious system of physical culture help a tragedy of that sort?

At first he felt stumped. Perhaps, he was tempted, there was some use for drugs after all. Perhaps a bottle of hair restorer *might* find a place, even in his

purely natural system. Then he revolted. No! His entire system was aghast at the idea. There must be *some* method of applying the principles in which he believed even to this local problem of an approaching bald head.

But how can you exercise your hair?

In the very asking of that apparently absurd question, Macfadden found an answer which was sufficient, for himself, at least.

Of course you can exercise your hair! Pull it! Pull it! Pull it!

Macfadden found himself saying the words aloud, and he forthwith seized a crop of his hair in his hand and began to pull. The more he thought about it, and the more it hurt to pull it, the more reasonable the idea seemed to him. Pulling the hair should stimulate the roots, he reflected. Just as any moderate exercise will stimulate any other part of the system. When doctors disagree, I cannot express an opinion on the scientific accuracy of this deduction. I do know that the book is popular and that Macfadden is very proud of the thousands of testimonials which readers have sent him. I also know that he is very proud of his own hair, which is full, bristling with life, and luxuriant at his age of sixty. Here, at least, is a man who is a good advertisement for his own remedy.

The story behind his book "Strengthening The Eyes" which is an important phase of physical culture, is even more amusing. It is also extremely sig-

nificant in the story of Macfadden's unending contest with the medical profession.

Macfadden believes that glasses are "eye crutches" and that healthy people should be ashamed to wear them. He believes that you can throw away your glasses and see better than ever by following his theories, which consist again, almost primarily, of exercises to renew the vigor and capacity of the eyes. And, as in the case of his hair treatment, this idea was evolved out of a personal experience. Like Joseph Pulitzer, Macfadden did a tremendous amount of proof-reading and he almost went blind, as Pulitzer did go blind. But Macfadden fell back on that which Pulitzer did not have to fall back on—an unshakable belief that nature is the only true physician and that if we live in harmony with natural laws we can be healed.

Having worked out a system of eye exercises which satisfied him—because his own eyesight was restored by their application—Macfadden sat down and gave serious thought to what he was about to do. It was a serious thing to publish a book that told other people to throw away their glasses; to dismiss the whole science of the oculists in one contemptuous gesture. It was a far more serious affair than attacking the patent medicine quacks. Why not seek professional advice on the subject?

Macfadden did seek such advice on the subject. He went to a physician specializing on the eyes and laid his ideas before him. To his astonishment, this per-

fectly regular medical man declared that Macfadden's deductions were absolutely scientific and sound medical practice; that he (the medical man) had come independently to the same conclusion; that they were fellow discoverers of a great new truth.

By this, Macfadden felt, naturally, very much encouraged. Immediately he proposed that they write a book together and offer the new eye system to the public. The doctor agreed, the book was written in collaboration, signed with their joint names, printed and put on sale. Its circulation was large and immediate.

And then one day there came into Macfadden's office a very harried and distressed physician. He was Macfadden's collaborator, and he was in the gravest difficulty. The powers that be in the medical profession were very much annoyed with him. Why? He had written a book with Bernarr Macfadden!

"My God, Mr. Macfadden!" said this physician. "You have got to take my name off that book or my career is over."

Macfadden recalled the book at once, printed a new edition in which his name appeared as sole author, and it is still selling today under its title of "Strengthening The Eyes."

Meanwhile, the doctor has built up a great practice, and has elaborate offices in the most fashionable neighborhood of New York. He charges enormous fees to his patients, he makes them throw away their glasses and exercise their eyes until they get well again—and

the whole system is the same as that contained in the book which Macfadden distributes to this day.

Yet ask any medical man of your acquaintance what he thinks of the Macfadden eye book and then listen!

The curious attitude of the regular oculist does seem to run counter to common sense, even if that common sense be only that of the layman. The average oculist looks upon the eye solely as an instrument of vision. That it is also a very complex arrangement of tissues, supported and moved by a number of muscles, is seldom taken into consideration in a diagnosis or a treatment. The eye specialist will possibly declare to you that the "muscle of accommodation" begins to fail at about the age of thirty. His remedy for that failure is glasses. As the muscle grows weaker, his remedy is stronger glasses. Macfadden's idea is to strengthen that muscle, just as you strengthen the flabby muscle of an arm or a leg. Glasses, he maintains, pander to the laziness of the muscle and encourage its further degeneracy.

I have spoken before of Macfadden's pride in the keenness of his vision; he reads the finest print, and the most distant signs with a virtuoso display that is truly discomfiting. Again, it is a case of a man who is not a physician but who has healed himself.

This is not the place for an extended discussion of his theories on the sex life. All that he has advocated in this regard is fully expounded in his many books on the subject, and in the frequent discussions which have

appeared in his magazine. Suffice it to say that his theories here seem happily to be in consonance with the best medical thought of the time. His ideas on the diet of a woman during pregnancy, on the feeding of infants, on sexual virility in man and woman, are further adaptations of his whole system, and all are designed to meet nature half-way, to live in harmony with nature as he understands it. He has evolved an entire system of cookery, including thousands of recipes, out of his own household experience and from the myriad letters received from enthusiastic followers of his system—all of them tested in the Physical Culture Food Laboratory conducted under the auspices of Milo Hastings. Also he has developed treatments for constipation, for diabetes, for tooth troubles, for rheumatics, asthma, hay fever, for all and sundry of the human ills and all based on the one fundamental principle.

Now, how much of this is good and how much of it is not, I am not prepared to say. Every system has its enthusiastic supporters, ready to tell of the miracles wrought in their own experience. The Christian Scientists do it purely by prayer, without the diet and exercises of Macfadden. But in the thirty years in which these methods have been applied, at times under the most stringent and searching scrutiny, there have been such amazing results that they do deserve the most searching medical investigation. It is not too much

to ask why the medical profession has ignored them so long.

Thus Macfadden's first quarrel with the medical profession is its indifference to natural methods, and whether that quarrel is just or not the reader may determine for himself. His second count against it is that it endeavors to stifle all opposition to its own methods, to permit no competition, either in experiment or in practice. This is, from his side, not a reflection upon physicians generally, but upon the monopolistic forces which control the profession, and against which many private physicians are as bitter as Macfadden himself.

It is particularly the American Medical Association that Macfadden has regarded as a destructive force. In a recent issue of *Physical Culture,* Macfadden summarized his case, as follows:

"What are termed the 'regular doctors' of this country," he writes, "have been given responsibilities in maintaining the health of the people that are extraordinary in nature. A monopoly of any kind is obnoxious, but when certain men are given a monopoly in the health of the public you can hardly expect them to do other than use this power to their financial advantage.

"The American Medical Association is a commercial organization. It is . . . conducted for financial profit. Medical doctors are just like other men. They are human and fallible. They are perhaps no worse, and

they are certainly no better, taken as a class. And when they are given God-like powers over the life and health of the public and are compelled to answer to no one for their neglect or mistakes, there can be but one result. There naturally would be many instances where they would take advantage of these extraordinary privileges.

"Why should they give other practitioners an opportunity to practice? What difference does it make to them how effective their methods might be?

"They are in power. They have been given the responsibility of curing or killing people as they might see fit, with no penalties whatever attached to incompetence.

"Therefore, they have been diligently working with every means in their power, with special attention to the legislatures of the country, for the purpose of maintaining a monopoly of the healing art for the allopathic doctor. They have placed every obstruction they possibly could in the way of competitive practitioners.

"There are no lines of competitive business wherein you find men who would stoop to the questionable methods adopted by the controlling powers of the medical trust in destroying competition. . . .

"This government has absolutely no right to allow any particular school of medicine any more privileges than those enjoyed by other schools of medicine.

"The healing art should be on a competitive basis, the same as all other particular phases of learning."

And in a single paragraph Macfadden strikes home at what is perhaps the greatest single abuse of modern medicine.

"Remedial measures that ordinarily take a generation or longer to make definite tests that are dependable are experimented on for a short period and then immediately introduced into the bodies of the American People.

"There are allopathic doctors everywhere who fully realize the truth of the statements we have made herein, and great numbers of them will be glad to be rid of the domination of the American Medical Association. They are robbed of their powers of self-determination.

"At all times individual doctors face the possibility of expulsion from their society in case they fail to obey the mandates of the American Medical Association.

"This obnoxious and monopolistic power held over the individual doctors by the American Medical Association is a menace to the life and health of the citizens of this country."

In this huge organization, Macfadden sees a tragic danger to the race, and he has repeatedly assailed it as a major evil which must be shorn of its power. Only recently he published in *Physical Culture Magazine* a series of articles designed to show the extent and nature of the American Medical Association.

The *Physical Culture* case against the American

Medical Association is of personal importance to every citizen of the United States for it can clearly be viewed as a matter of life and death. Only a summary of it can be presented here, but it is an integral part of one of the most important conflicts of Macfadden's career.

Almost 90,000 physicians out of the approximate 150,000 in the United States are members of the American Medical Association.

Through that sensational series of articles in the Macfadden magazine, the entire scope of operations of the American Medical Association was reviewed, and an indictment presented against many of its methods and a number of its intentions.

It was contended in this indictment that millions of dollars were spent every year to complete and maintain a monopoly of the healing art in America. By this, Macfadden means that the orthodox medical men want to drive the chiropractors, the osteopaths and other drugless healers from the field of competition. He most emphatically resents the charge, always hurled by the physicians, that such drugless healers are ignorant men, whose practice is dangerous to their patients. In the bitter war between the organized medical profession on the one hand and the drugless doctors on the other, Macfadden has been a staunch champion of the latter.

An interlocking co-operation between doctors and commercial interests that reaches into far fields was

alleged in this series of articles, which naturally aroused great resentment in medical circles. The usual cry that Macfadden did not know what he was talking about was raised by those on the other side. While Macfadden did not write the series, he knew exactly what they were talking about, and he saw to it that the case was buttressed with testimony from the camp of the enemy. Medical men themselves were quoted to establish the case against the medical men. For example, Dr. Ernest A. Codman, of Boston, a fellow of the Scientific Assembly of the American Medical Association itself, and a registrar of the unimpeachable American College of Surgeons, was quoted as follows:

"Among our most inefficient hospitals are some of our teaching institutions. Too many teach medicine by precept rather than by example, and too many are inclined to attempt more than they are equipped to do efficiently. They are like many of our busy professional brethren who attempt to care for more cases than they can care for well, rather than let a less conspicuous rival care for the simple ones."

Again, Dr. Codman was quoted as follows:—

"I have said that I was an expert in hospital inefficiency. My sole public duty is acting as registrar for an activity of the American College of Surgeons called the registry of bone sarcoma. This enables me to keep in touch with hospital inefficiency, through some of the best men in our profession—that is, through those that register their bone sarcoma cases.

"Before proceeding further, let me say this, that we have now collected from the most efficient surgeons and hospitals in the country notes on some four hundred cases of supposed bone sarcoma.

"All of these four hundred cases, with few exceptions, are records of error or failure.

"I have many of the foremost surgeons and pathologists in the country convicted in their own handwriting of gross errors in these cases.

"Legs have been amputated when they should not have been, and left on when they should have been amputated."

These statements, published in *"Physical Culture Magazine"* produced something like consternation. It was a most dangerous statement for Dr. Codman to have made, for if any of the four hundred victims were to learn that they had been crippled for life because of the ignorance of these noted surgeons, staggering suits for malpractice could be instituted.

Dr. D. R. Edsall, Dean of the Harvard Medical School, spoke plainly on the same subject of inefficient training. The magazine quoted him as follows:

"Almost all subjects must be taken at exactly the same time, and in almost exactly the same way, by all students, and the amount introduced into each course is such that few students have time or energy to explore any subject in a spirit of independent interest.

"A little comparison shows that there is less intellectual freedom in the medical course than in almost any

other form of professional education in this country."

And again Doctor Edsall was quoted as saying:

"I was, for a period, a professor of therapeutics and pharmacology, and I know from experience that students were obliged then by me and by others to learn about an interminable number of drugs, many of which were useless, some probably even harmful, some others relatively valueless."

Cushny, in the preface to the *Text Book of Pharmacology and Therapeutics,* was quoted about the host of useless drugs and medicines taught in the medical schools. He says:

"For as long as he (the medical student) has to learn the supposed virtues of a host of obscure substances, he will tend to use them in practice. This, in turn, necessitates their inclusion in the pharmacopœia, which again perpetuates them as subjects of teaching."

Of course, there is not space or opportunity to develop here the full case which *Physical Culture Magazine* presented in its series of articles. But the charges were damaging enough. They showed that through the group insurance plan, it was practically impossible for the victim of a drunken doctor, or a stupid doctor, to recover damages in court—so long as the physician was a member in good standing of the various associations and had paid his malpractice insurance premiums. It is next to impossible, under such a system, according to these articles, for a plaintiff to get one doctor to testify against another. The doctor

buries his mistakes, and none of his *confreres* will help prove a case against him. "It is a beautiful example of brotherly affection," says Macfadden.

This is but one of the dangers of such a monopoly as was alleged in that historic series; let it serve to represent all the others that were marshalled there. The purpose of these articles was to demonstrate that commercialism, instead of high professional ethics, controlled organized medicine—an organization which, it was argued, linked together in a tight and sordid alliance the drug companies and many other diverse interests with the professional healers of mankind. From a constructive angle, this series proposed the physical culture program—a plea for the free development of drugless healing, for a curb on the governmental assistance to the serum manufacturers, and the abolition of compulsory vaccination, in fact, all the reforms for which Macfadden has fought so long.

It might be said that this series of articles was the culmination of all the clamoring years that went before; of all the many attacks Macfadden had made on what he regards as the most serious evil of his time. It was the latest battle in a long and bitter war.

Even so, and irrespective of all that has been said in the foregoing, the war between Macfadden and the medical profession might never have attained the bitter proportions that it did, were it not for his uncompromising stand on the pet theory of the doctors.

By this, of course, I mean vaccination.

The one conspicuous and out-standing and uncompromising foe of that serum-therapy about which the medical doctors are so enthusiastic, has been Bernarr Macfadden.

The attitude of the average man toward vaccination is one of reluctant but obedient consent. He doesn't like it, but he is sure it must be right because the doctors say so. That is really all that most people know about it. But because of the overwhelming and superstitious respect which the public accords its physicians, they do accept the theory as gospel. They are sure that any opposition to vaccination must be ignorant and irresponsible. Our best thinkers accept the authority and assurance of doctors on vaccination, without further inquiry, in spite of the fact that they know that when they are vaccinated they are filling their veins with deadly germs.

Now, whether Macfadden is right or wrong about vaccination, he is no fool, no ignoramus on the subject, much as his enemies would like to make him so to appear. There is some important scientific backing for his furious opposition to the practice not only from George Bernard Shaw but also among medical men.

The whole idea of specific remedies or preventatives is getting shakier every day, as every physician knows.

Your own family physician will probably tell you that the specific remedies of the pharmacopœia can be counted on the fingers of one hand. He will then proceed to name quinine for malaria, mercury for syphilis,

or perhaps he will stipulate salvarsan, and one or two others.

But here Macfadden violently disagrees. He denies that quinine cures malaria. He insists that mercury has never yet healed a case of syphilis. More, he declares that powerful poison has added to the errors of the disease, rather than alleviating it.

Having taken that position, he proceeds to argue against vaccination with a feeling of such intensity that he fairly seethes with indignation when he attacks the practice of experimenting with serums on the bodies of helpless school children.

In nothing that he has ever done has Macfadden endured more misrepresentation than in his fight on vaccination. The doctors—your own doctor, probably—will tell you that any man, in this enlightened day who opposes vaccination is simply an ignoramus or a fool. Macfadden is neither. Macfadden will tell you about England, which no doctor with whom he talked about vaccination ever seems to mention of his own free will. Macfadden will tell you that England was a stronghold of the whole vaccination theory—and then he will remind you that England has long since cancelled her laws for compulsory vaccination. A citizen of England does not have to be vaccinated if he does not believe in it. That is all Macfadden has ever asked for, in free America, the sweet land of liberty, where if your children are not vaccinated

they can't go to school, and if they don't go to school, their parents go to jail.

It is amusing, if one has the time, to follow Macfadden's relentless pursuit through the archives of medical history, to show how persistently, and often habitually the doctors were wrong. Just as the leeches in the times of our great-grand-fathers maintained that blood-letting was the sovereign technique of all their therapeutics, so time and time again he reminds his enemies they have proclaimed the virtues of other methods which their descendants had to discard with derision.

For instance, only a few years ago it was announced that a research institution had found there were three distinct forms of pneumonia, and that up until then the pneumonia serums had failed simply because there were not three specific serums for each type. But now, so the doctors assured their fellow-men, the germs of the three pneumonias were being isolated—and the specific serums would follow at once. The long scourge of pneumonia would pass away as finally and completely as the Egyptian darkness.

Alas! Why has not pneumonia vanished then? Macfadden propounds the question with a mild sarcasm that digs deep. "You have your pneumonia serum," he tells the doctors, "and your patients still have pneumonia!"

In private conversations, he becomes deeply indignant about it. With his eyes blazing, he demands how

far the doctors think they will go in their curious journey on the way of serum therapy.

"Where is it to end?" he inquires. "You take an innocent child, and having awed his parents, you proceed to work out your ideas upon his body. And what do you do? First you remove his tonsils. Then you remove the benign glandular growths of the adenoid tissues. Nature has a use for both, but you shear them away. Never mind if you expose the child to grave dangers—danger of death, danger of middle-ear inflammation, danger of mastoiditis! Never mind all that! You shear them away. And then you vaccinate that child. Why? To immunize him against smallpox. Next he must be inoculated against typhoid and also against what you call para-typhoid. One would think by now you had done enough. But have you? Not yet! There is still more you can do to him—and you will, if his parents can afford it. You'll now administer the Dick test. That's for scarlet fever—more drugs and germs in the body of the poor child. And still you are not satisfied. So you'll give him the Shick injection for diptheria. In God's name, where is it all to end?"

Where is it to end? When Macfadden asks you that question, he will also remind you that each of these serums creates a profound change in the body. One will re-act on the other. You are, he insists, destroying the body that was born from its mother, and substituting for it a mass of alien chemicals.

More, he will ask of you if it is not true that a body that can build up its own resistance to such diseases—the natural resistance of a strong body, vibrant with health—is not a nearer approach to physical perfection.

Certainly there is a great deal to be said on both sides. The only difficulty is that the medical profession has always refused to dignify Macfadden's side with its attention. In this, I am satisfied, it has made a mistake.

At all events, there, in brief summary is his case, and for the thirty years that followed his starting of *Physical Culture Magazine* he has continued to hammer home his side of it with all the vigor at his command.

CHAPTER VI

The Fight Against Prudery

In none of his myriad activities has Macfadden found his sincerity more questioned than in his fight for frankness about sex.

If the man has the messianic idea, he has had also the martyr's experience here. Against an unceasing suspicion of his motives, against the hostility of the very forces on whose support he felt he might rely, he has persisted in a campaign for frankness in sex education that has produced an actual change in national psychology—a change, for which he is the last man to receive any credit.

The reformers were automatically against him in such a campaign,—against him from the start. The reactionary mind could see nothing but pruriency in a frank attitude toward what they deprecatingly called the facts of life. To some of them sex was admittedly not a divine mystery, but a filthy shame. That anyone should look upon it with respect or with frankness, and discuss its physical problems from the viewpoint of good health and happiness was a challenge to their sense of personal righteousness. When Macfadden began his long battle against the secrecy and shame in which the sex life of man had been wrapped, he

fully counted on such opposition. He knew the superstition, the ignorance, the blind and unreasoning shame that would try to hush him up. He knew that many people thought such things should not be talked about. He meant to try to change that attitude, and he expected to have a hard fight in doing so.

But he felt that he had a right to the support of the more advanced thinkers, the professed leaders of reform, who were crying for freedom of thought and its expression. When he permitted Havelock Ellis to speak freely in the pages of *Physical Culture Magazine*, he felt that thinkers everywhere would recognize the sincerity of his purpose. He was fighting the thinkers' fight. He was amazed that they turned upon him, with a ferocity equalled only by his natural enemies on the other side. For a long time he was puzzled at his extraordinary hostility. I doubt if he really understands it to this day.

The difference was this:

The advanced thinkers were advocating freedom of thought and its expression in the holy name of art.

Macfadden was advocating the same freedom in the simple name of Health.

There is very little meeting ground for two such different impulses. Health has been said to be opposed to art; perhaps art, too, resents the full-blooded gusto of health.

At all events, Macfadden found himself in a truly tragic position, between two fires, and he is still there,

although from the beginning he has had the warm support of many prominent leaders. The old alignments persist. Macfadden once said he has had to make his fight, against the opposition of the low-brow reformers and the high-brow intellectuals. It is truly a laughable condition. There are liberal men in America today who believe that the books of James Joyce should be freely circulated, but that Bernarr Macfadden's magazines should be prohibited by constitutional amendment.

The fact remains, however, that Macfadden has done more in the United States to liberalize thought regarding sex and regarding the display of the human figure than any other man, living or dead.

Lest this statement sound extreme, I ask the reader to follow the story of what Macfadden did in this cause before coming to a judgment.

Where he conceived the civilized ideas for which he has argued so long and so valiantly, I have never been able to determine. A man is not born on a Missouri farm with a reverence for the human body, with a solemn belief in its purity and beauty, with a Greek respect for a figure of classical perfection, with an intense hatred of any shame connected with it. Yet Macfadden loathes any shame of the body as he loathes a disgusting odor. To him the body of a man or a woman is the loveliest of all creation's work, and his creed, at its foundation, exists for the care and ennoblement of that body.

It is, I repeat, hard to understand how he first came to entertain these thoughts. They were brave, daring radical thoughts, back before the mauve decade, when Macfadden was growing up on the Missouri farm. The farmers would have been ready to send him to an insane asylum, had he voiced such ideas to them, over their supper table.

I have tried to explain it, for it is one of the baffling facts about the man. Perhaps, I have reasoned, it began when he thought he was doomed to an early death; when all his ambitions were concentrated merely on keeping his body alive. Perhaps he found certain books, in those long hours he spent in the public libraries, books that spoke to his untutored mind of the ideals of the Attic masters. Perhaps George Baptiste, the silent, when he spoke, as rarely he did speak, had a few ideas on the subject. Somewhere the boy Macfadden listened and was convinced of that which the man Macfadden was to preach in the face of almost unprecedented opposition, abuse and persecution.

Had he done it in the name of art it would have been a different story. Any thinking man, aware of the public mind and its weaknesses, can understand that. But he did it in the name of health—and for that he was called many names.

However and wherever Macfadden learned to love and reverence the human body, and to hate all the puritanical shame connected with it, there is no doubt

where he got the idea that frankness in sex education was a national necessity.

That conviction came to him during the first year that he spent in a gymnasium. There he saw some of the ghastly wrecks of manhood, gone adrift on the rocks of ignorance. In those days, what we euphoniously call the "social diseases" were kept a dark and horrible mystery. Boys were not warned against them, for their fathers were ashamed to talk to them fearlessly and earnestly. They seldom got any further than telling their sons to keep away from bad women. Yet there were bad women at every street corner, plying the oldest profession in the world.

When America entered into the World War, and millions of young men were examined as to their physical condition, during the draft registration, the army physicians made a staggering discovery

One man out of every three was suffering from a venereal infection.

At once it was recognized that these secret diseases were a far greater menace to our national effectiveness than the shells of the Germans, their poison gas or their murderous bombs.

Yet, even at so late a date as 1917, the prudish reticence of magazines, newspapers and books was almost beyond belief. Aghast at what had been discovered in the army cantonments the doctors of the United States health service undertook a vigorous campaign in public education. But they ran up against a blank wall.

The newspapers wouldn't dare print the material. They were afraid. They refused to print the word "syphilis" in a newspaper. Not until President Wilson sent out a personal letter to *newspaper proprietors* were the bars of prudery let down. And then it was only for the duration of the war. In spite of the ghastly prevalence of venereal disease, the newspapers will not tell the public of the dangers—particularly to girls who do not know what manner of man they may be marrying.

The authorities were dazed at this dreadful revelation; dazed at facts to which their eyes had just been opened, dazed at facts which Macfadden had been howling aloud to them with the zeal of a whirling dervish for more than a quarter of a century.

Macfadden knew. With his own eyes he had seen in the gymnasiums what they were to see twenty-five years after in the draft examination rooms. He had cried out prayerfully and fearfully for a campaign of education that would save these young men from that wrath of poisoned blood flowing in their veins; and to save the children and the children's children, even unto the third and fourth generations.

They had called him for that a commercial sensation seeker, a man who was capitalizing filth in the name of health, a man who was selling smut, a man who ought to be put out of business. How many dying wretches would not have died so soon, how many rickety babies would have been born with strong bodies and good blood, how many idiots, cripples and inhuman

monstrosities would never have been born into the world, if they had listened to his lonely voice, no one can tell. Macfadden did have the facts; he did know what he was talking about, and in this, he was sincere.

But few others knew it until three million men were put under arms, their clothes taken from their backs and their bodies laid bare before the doctors of the army.

Very early in the publication of his magazine, Macfadden started this fight. He knew the secret evil that was abroad, eating at the vitals of the young manhood of the nation. He knew, too, that they were going to quack doctors, and that after their treatment in such hands the last state of those unfortunates was worse than the first. Macfadden had listened to the stories of some of those unfortunates. Some of them had not even known of the existence of such diseases until they were taken ill.

But even Macfadden did not know then, what he later found out, and published, and what the foremost doctors of the United States have time and time again admitted, that eighty percent of all the operations performed upon women in the United States were due to venereal diseases, innocently acquired.

These and other equally startling facts were exposed in a recent article in *Physical Culture Magazine* by Dr. Royal S. Copeland, M.D., himself a most orthodox physician, a United States Senator from New York, and a strong foe of that same prudery which Macfad-

Bernarr Macfadden and Senator Royal S. Copeland of New York.

Bernarr Macfadden and Henry Ford. Photograph taken during a visit to the Ford factory.

den has been fighting so long. "If we don't abolish prudery we shall perish as a nation," Dr. Copeland said in this article.

Years ago, Macfadden was boiling with the same conviction and the passion to arouse the nation to a national scourge. He went ahead, hammering hard at the monster of secrecy in spite of the fact that he had already incurred the baleful eye of that apostle of all secrecy, goodness, sweetness and light known to an amazed posterity as Anthony Comstock.

Macfadden can smile at Comstock now. In those days the very mention of one's name to the other would make the other foam at the mouth. It all began back in 1905, when Comstock was at the zenith of his rampage through New York. At that time Macfadden was holding a physical culture exhibition in Madison Square Garden. The exhibition was a part of his campaign to awaken the American people to a desire for physical perfection, and was also propaganda for his magazine.

Now the horrible truth has to be told. Girls and men were appearing on the stage of the old garden in tights. To modern Americans, accustomed to one-piece bathing suits and the parades of the musical revues, this may seem harmless enough. But this exhibition was in the days of 1905, when Anthony Comstock was custodian of the public morals. Comstock had not seen the show, but one of his agents had brought him a report about it.

Comstock had heard of Macfadden before. The two men had never met, but Comstock had formed a mental image of a terrible strong man, who might eat silk-hatted reformers for dinner. But was Anthony Comstock ever dismayed from performing the sacred duties of his public trust? Not so long as he could have his husky guards all around him.

It was an exciting day for Comstock when he went down to Madison Square Garden to take a look at those pictures. His eyes wandered around the billboards and fell at last upon a colorful display. What he saw was not the Macfadden posters at all, but a burlesque show advertisement instead. In large type he read, "The Bouncing Blonde Belles of the Bowery."

Comstock blinked. Was this all that the man Macfadden was displaying? There were some over-plump young women pictured, lifting their skirts to reveal a lot of fascinating lingerie, while they looked out at the silk-hatted, bewhiskered reformer with a very naughty twinkle in their eyes. Looking at that burlesque show poster today we would say that it was simply crude and vulgar, suggestive in a blatant appeal to the stevedores and truck-drivers. Comstock may have heaved a disappointed sigh. There was nothing wrong about that poster that he could see. He must have been misinformed.

And then his gaze strayed to another billboard and he saw what he had come, indeed, to see. These bouncing blondes were *not* the *Physical Culture* posters.

No. Over there, on the opposite side were Macfadden's pictures,—the dreadful things! They were groups and individual poses of the winners in the previous year's physical culture exhibition. The men were dressed in gymnasium costumes, to show their muscular development; the women wore combination suits, each with a silken sash around her waist.

Mr. Comstock confessed later that he felt mortified. He said that he regarded these physical culture posters as the height of pornography and public impudence. How dare this man Macfadden make such a disgusting and lewd and vulgar display?

Comstock applied to three magistrates before he could get a warrant, but he finally got one.

Then he assembled a force of twenty huskies and feeling amply protected, he set out to capture the terrible strong man.

Macfadden, happily unaware of all this excitement, was working at his desk, when his office door was suddenly thrown open and three men rushed violently in upon him. One was the mighty Comstock himself. Another was Comstock's chief deputy and the third was a detective.

Comstock told Macfadden that he was under arrest.

"And now, Mr. Macfadden," added the reformer, as he stroked his whiskers in a paternal manner, "my advice to you is that you plead guilty to the charge of violating the penal code, and since this is your first offense, I will try to get a light sentence imposed."

To Comstock's amazement, Macfadden declined this patronizing offer. Instead he told the reformer that he had no intention of making any such plea.

"Why not?" gasped Comstock.

Macfadden explained that it was a matter of principle; the principle that there was nothing lewd, or shameful or disgusting in the human body, a principle for which he had been arguing a long time in his magazine. Had Mr. Comstock ever read the magazine?

It was a truly tragic moment. Mr. Comstock heaved a mighty sigh, over the wickedness of the world with which he had to deal. He pointed an unshaking and accusing finger at one picture after another on the office wall. There was one picture of Macfadden himself in gymnasium trunks.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself for standing up there like that?" demanded Comstock.

His finger moved to a photograph of a Roman statue.

"That is dirt!" he said.

He came next to the Venus de Milo picture.

"Obscene!" he said.

His eyes roved all around the room.

"This place is just a nest of dirty pictures," he cried and clapped his hands.

That was a signal. Instantly the door was flung open and into Macfadden's office there poured a score of detectives, all under the captaincy of Comstock. At his command they tore down the pictures from the

walls and they rifled Macfadden's desk. They carried all their booty down to police headquarters, and Macfadden quietly went along.

Of course the whole affair melted into nothing, but it was the beginning of a long and bitter war. Comstock was determined to put Macfadden out of business and he worked in season and out to do it. And Macfadden struck back with perhaps unwise vindictiveness in his magazine. Today he can laugh at the old reformer, but in those days it was not a laughing matter.

"Comstock, King of the Prudes," is the title of a continued series of editorials which Macfadden wrote for *Physical Culture.*

"The most influential enemy to boys and girls of this country," he declared, "and of all the countries where the English language is spoken and read is Comstock. He is the quintessence of prudery. It is he who has persistently stood for the suppression of truth and the reverence of the human body. It is he who has fought with insane intensity against every pure thought that comes to the human mind in reverence of the divine mysteries of human life. Comstock stands for all that is impure, salacious, and obscene. He stands for mystery, secrecy, ignorance, superstition, and for the most depraved conception of all that should be divine and holy. Although heretofore, we have never mentioned Comstock in the pages of this magazine, nevertheless we have fought his principles with the utmost inten-

sity almost from the first issue of this publication. We will fight him and his theories on to the bitter end."

Until this time, Comstock and his fellow reformers had paid no official attention to Macfadden's crusade for greater frankness in sex education. Their protests had been solely against any revelation of the human figure. But the time was coming when they were to take a more active interest in the matter.

It all came about when one of the greatest dreams of Macfadden's life was nearing its realization—the founding of a community devoted exclusively to his ideals; the establishment of Physical Culture City. In the trouble of which I am now to tell you, Physical Culture City went down into undeserved disaster; a fortune of more than one hundred thousand dollars was wiped out, and Macfadden tasted the most bitter experience of his lifetime.

A city of Physical Culture had been a dream of his for a long time. He had made various approaches to the experiment. Some few years after the magazine was safely on its feet, an announcement appeared that Bernarr Macfadden was about to open a health home. It was clearly stated that no fees would be charged, but that only patients would be accepted who had been given up by medical men as being impossible to cure. This was the germ from which Physical Culture City eventually was evolved.

The daring challenge of the physical culturist to his medical adversaries was carried out. The Health

Home was opened in Hudson, a little town about fifty miles distant from New York City. Thousands of applications were received for admittance to the home, and finally six sufferers were selected. They each represented a separate and highly formidable disease: asthma, tuberculosis, rheumatism, vital depletion, paralysis and emaciation. As soon as these patients had been accepted for treatment their photographs were published in the magazine.

Terrible photographs they were. The crippled, emaciated bodies stand out, on those old pages, like reproductions of exhibits in some chamber of horror. One was a Mrs. Cole, the rheumatic patient. She was hardly able to stand upright, and, in addition to her rheumatic condition, she had an almost complete paralysis of the digestive system. And there was Tarbox, too; Tarbox, the asthma patient, who had groaned in agony every night for thirteen years. Now he was said to be at the point of death. The poor devil, was little more than a living skeleton. He literally fought for every gasp of breath he drew. He said he had tried every known remedy for the cure of his disease, and for nine years had been sampling the merits of patent medicines, doctors' prescriptions, sanitariums, and health resorts, without any relief at all.

Also there was Andrew Axelson, the consumptive. Of Axelson, Macfadden wrote, "We will cure him of consumption, and we might also add that he is suffering

from a rupture which we also have hopes of curing at the same time."

The asthma patient perhaps elicited Macfadden's chief interest and sympathy, on account of his pitiable condition, and also because the source of asthma was a mystery to the medical profession at that period.

The publicity given to these cases attracted the widest attention and interest. As month after month passed by, and photographs were published in *Physical Culture Magazine,* showing the undeniable improvement in the condition of the patients, the public interest increased. There was no doubt that the radical experiment was succeeding; Macfadden was again giving actual proof of the value of his methods, and his Health Home was justifying itself as a means of propaganda.

Tarbox gained a pound a day. At the end of the month he left the home thirty pounds heavier than when he entered it. He was a well man, and he returned to his work to face a most unusual difficulty. From all over the country thousands of letters poured in on the man, asking him personally to assure them of the actuality of his improvement. Macfadden actually had to provide him a stenographer for weeks afterward to answer these letters.

The tuberculosis patient was remarkably improved; Axelson, who also suffered from hernia, threw away his truss and was completely cured; Mrs. Cole got rid

of her rheumatism, and the others showed marked improvement.

By the success of this daring adventure, Macfadden was naturally greatly encouraged; so much so, in fact, that in the following summer he opened a large sanitarium on the shores of Lake Ronkonkoma, in the heart of Long Island. At one time he had one hundred and twenty-five patients there, many of them sleeping under tents because the house could not accommodate even half that many.

But this was a disastrous experience. Macfadden was a publisher now, and his magazine interests were getting larger and more demanding every day. He had not the time now for such a difficult enterprise. True, his patients showed improvement, and that was what he was most interested in, but the executive management of the hotel was another matter. Some of his attendants turned out to be thieves and robbed the patients; others were intoxicated when Macfadden was in the city; Macfadden had a house of trouble on his hands, and at the close of the season he shut it up with a sigh of relief.

But he was and is a persistent man. He was now determined to carry through the experiment on a still larger scale, and under conditions where he could avoid a repetition of this last disaster. The dream of a city of Physical Culture had taken hold of him with a compelling fascination. He felt that the time had come to give the idea a trial.

He was all the more able to do this because of the increasing success of the magazine. In the first seven or eight years of the new century, writers had been attracted to it, men who understood and believed in its principles, and Macfadden was no longer its principal contributor. He had also found men who could edit it according to his ideas. Thus he felt that he could reasonably hope to delegate a great deal of the detail of the publication to his employes, while he busied himself with the creation of this marvelous new commonwealth,—a self-supporting city, dedicated to health.

From time to time Macfadden had hinted in the pages of *Physical Culture Magazine* that something of this sort was engaging his mind. In one issue we find an inquiry as to whether any of his readers knows of a tract of about one thousand acres that can be purchased at a reasonable price. And, in finally disclosing his project, Macfadden timidly suggests that home industries can be carried on—and that the settlers can also raise bees and sell honey!

He was serious about the bees and the honey—more than one article on the advantages and opportunities of bee-keeping appears in those early issues. Bees and poultry, agricultural small holdings and true physical cultural methods of life,—that was the great project and now Macfadden proceeded to put his dream into immediate and practical effect.

Early in the year of 1906, he acquired a large tract of land at Helmetta, New Jersey. Helmetta was next

to the town of Spottswood, which you can find on the map of New Jersey if you go looking for it with a powerful magnifying glass. This tract of land Bernarr Macfadden christened Physical Culture City. It was to be the home of his magazine, on which his fortune and his life work was being builded; it was also to have a monumental health home where his experiments could be carried out on a grand scale, and it was to form a community of earnest believers in his ideas, who would lead a simple life and make a commonwealth founded on sane living according to natural laws. All this and more it was to be.

Macfadden was indefatigable in the pursuit of this enormous project. He received settlers who came there, determined to be pioneers in the new community. He helped them plan their houses, and he laid out the streets. The buildings began to rise; the dream city taking tangible form before his happy eyes. The buildings for the Health Home were erected. The Pennsylvania Railroad put up a station there. The printing office was built; a printing office that was turning out not only the magazine, but books and pamphlets and tracts to broadcast the message of Physical Culture. Soon the magazines were being published in a city built upon the ideals they spread throughout the world.

Many a man and many a woman regained lost health and vigor in Physical Culture City. The story of one of them, Upton Sinclair, has been told by himself in

a book on fasting and milk diet. Sinclair came to Macfadden when his health was gone. Macfadden made him well. Another was Harry Kemp, the tramp poet. The list is a long one.

And then Macfadden made a decision, an editorial decision for his magazine, that had nothing to do with Physical Culture City, but a decision which nevertheless sent the frail towers of that dream city crumbling into oblivion.

Among the patients who flocked to him there were many of those victims of sexual ignorance which, long before, had filled Macfadden with burning indignation. For all his thundering editorials he seemed to be getting nowhere in his campaign against prudery and silence. The public was apathetic. Most people were afraid of the subject. Their attitude seemed to be that one should let sleeping dogs lie. Only Macfadden knew that the dogs were not asleep. He knew also that the theory of letting young men sow their wild oats in ignorance was a dangerous menace to posterity.

But what could he do to wake up the public and make America recognize that menace?

Why not tell it to them in a story?

To Macfadden this idea appeared with all the force and brightness of an inspiration. The greatest teachers of mankind had found in the parable the direct and the most potent weapon. The human mind responded to the story more quickly than to any other appeal.

Why not show, in story form, the tragic consequences of wild oats?

"And there," Macfadden said to himself, "I have my title—'Wild Oats.' "

At that time there had come to Physical Culture City one of the most remarkable men in the world. Most probably you have never heard of his name, but you have certainly heard of his work. His name was John R. Coryell, he was a writer, and it was to him that Macfadden turned with his project for a story that would show the dangers of wild and untaught youth.

Now in Coryell, Macfadden found a sympathetic listener. I have said that Coryell was one of the most remarkable men in the world. He was all of that, and more. He was the originator of one of the popular characters of popular American fiction—"Nick Carter." At his death, some few years ago, all the newspapers in New York paid a loving tribute to his memory. Other men have claimed to be the originator of Nick Carter, but Coryell *was* the originator. He also wrote hundreds of romances under the pseudonym of "Bertha M. Clay." Millions of girls in America found their vicarious romances in the paper-backed novels of Mr. Coryell. And you have only to read them to discover that the secret of his amazing popularity with the youth of his day lay in the fact that he always had an interesting story to tell, and that he

told it in clear, simple and precise English, understandable by anyone.

But Coryell was a more complex character than any such bare and brief recital of his career might indicate. He was from an old and distinguished New England family; he had a liberal education, a broad culture, was widely traveled, had lived years in China and Japan, and was a brave and radical thinker. No writer ever more completely concealed himself in his work. He was so utterly different a personality from what would be indicated by what he wrote that the contradiction was almost incredible. He collaborated with Ambrose Bierce; he was a partner of Fletcher, the apostle of long chewing; he was actively engaged in many political campaigns of a liberal character, and he was a singularly sweet and winning personality.

This was the John R. Coryell to whom Macfadden went with his "Wild Oats" story idea. At once Coryell saw the social value of the suggestion, and in those days Coryell was greatly interested in social welfare. He readily agreed to the undertaking and at once went to work.

Now "Wild Oats" which he wrote was not such a good story. It was not nearly so good a story as many a romance which Coryell tacked out mechanically on his typewriter for the paper-backed library. But it was done with a firm sense of conviction. In it was the same spirit, if not the same art and power, that Brieux put into *"Damaged Goods."* Incidentally, in

spite of all that had happened to him, Macfadden later published "Damaged Goods" in his magazine—the first hearing, I believe, it ever received in the United States.

"Wild Oats" began to appear serially in *Physical Culture* and at once created intense excitement. Opinion was divided about it, but everyone wanted to read it. If Macfadden wanted attention for his campaign, he was getting it at last. Certainly he was learning, as had Hamlet, that the play, the story, was the thing.

And then came the bolt out of the blue.

Macfadden was arrested on a federal warrant, charged with sending lewd and obscene matter through the mails.

At first, Macfadden could not take the charge seriously. He felt there was a certain amount of petty politics behind it. He had tried to get a postoffice for Physical Culture City, but the Spottswood postmaster had objected, because with the magazine mail flowing through his own hands now, the postmaster had asked for and received a very large increase in salary. If Macfadden got his own postoffice, the postmaster would be a poor man again. Believing that he could show this to be the source of the trouble, Macfadden felt that there was no serious outcome possible to the charge.

But here he reckoned wrong.

Of this period before the trial, when he continued his community organization work without worrying particularly about his approaching trial, Macfadden has

sometimes spoken wonderingly. Why did he not realize the seriousness of the situation?

"Well," he answers, "I did not realize it, that is all. I thought the value of 'Wild Oats' would be apparent to anyone who would take the trouble to read it. I was sure the story itself would be its own best defense. If you had spent your life working for a purpose which you considered a worthy one, if you were in possession of thousands of grateful letters from persons who claimed they owed their very lives to you, if you had made countless homes happy, and strengthened the bodies of adults and children, would you consider that in doing so you had committed a crime?"

But when, at last, the trial was reached, there came a sentence of two years' imprisonment and a fine of two thousand dollars.

Then Macfadden awoke, stunned, to the reality of his situation.

Judge Lanning, sitting in the Federal Building at Trenton, denied his appeal for a new trial. The story "Wild Oats" was declared to be lewd, obscene and lascivious. The sentence was confirmed.

In the next issue of *Physical Culture Magazine,* Macfadden published an editorial which read as follows:

"With this penalty staring me in the face, which, to my mind, is a disgrace to the nation, I am going out among the people, among my friends and my enemies. I am going out to preach the gospel that stands for

manhood and womanhood, that stands for clean minds and clean morals. I am going to put my case before the people. I am willing that my verdict should rest with the people. I am willing that my life and my work shall be submitted to any tests that may be brought to bear upon them."

Pending the appeal against his sentence, he started out on a lecture tour, visiting Boston, Cincinnati, Baltimore and other cities. Crowds flocked to hear him; greater crowds than he had ever before talked to. His case had come into national prominence; everywhere he and his ideals were the subject of discussion. In this he found a real satisfaction, in spite of his own predicament. At least his object was realized; he had made the people look upon a subject the danger of which, until then, they had refused to acknowledge.

Finally he reached Washington, where he went to the postal authorities. They assured him that not a single complaint against "Wild Oats" had been received by the department. Yet the Circuit Court of Appeals of New Jersey affirmed the original verdict, after those two harassing years which Macfadden spent in lecturing, in editing his magazine, while more and more he was forced to neglect his dream metropolis, his Physical Culture City, now gradually being abandoned.

When the sentence was affirmed by the Circuit Court, Macfadden refused to despair. At this junc-

ture, his attorney, Henry M. Earle, wrote him a letter which deserves to be quoted:

"If there were any doubts as to the obscenity of the articles, I at least expected the upper court to order a retrial on the grounds that you had not had a fair trial, for to that much every man is entitled. I have statements from some of the jurors, showing that they were misled by the Court's instructions. No one who knows your life and your charities, and how you have labored for the benefit of humanity, in the cause of physical culture and kindred branches of higher and decent living, including the suppression of prudery, can for a moment hesitate to disagree with the Court in their statement that your object is to publish indecent stories under the guise of a magazine devoted to physical culture; that any one could take such a view—well, here words fail me; it is as preposterous as the fact that the Post Office Department and the machinery of the Government and Courts can be brought into use against you by the prudish cranks whose real characters you have disclosed in your magazine. . . . There is but to fight on, with the hope that the Higher Court will be able to understand, as do your constant readers, that in teaching parents the dangers of failing to properly inform their children against the evils into which they go blindly, you are not to be classed among the criminals who deal in vile, lascivious literature for what can be made from its sale. . . . When a man of your type and purposes can receive a sentence of two

years in the penitentiary for an article such as you published, it is time for thinkers, publishers, authors and editors to awaken to the dangers of having the obscenity laws interpreted by ignorant jurors, and by judges who blush at the sight of classic Greek statuary."

The sentence was affirmed by the Supreme Court of the land, but it is no more than fair to Macfadden and to the good name of the court to point out that this court did not pass on the merits of his case. The Supreme Court merely ruled that there was no constitutional question involved, and that, therefore, it had no power to intervene.

There was an immediate public outcry. From all over the United States there flowed in to President Taft at the White House letters and telegrams asking him to interfere. These messages of protest came from lawyers, from clergymen, yes, and even from doctors. Newspapers spoke sympathetically of him as of a man being pilloried because of his intense devotion to the truth.

President Taft was sufficiently impressed to refer the case to Attorney General Wickersham. It was pointed out then to Mr. Wickersham that the meaning of the statute had been strained and perverted to fit this special case. In this view the Attorney General so thoroughly concurred that he advised President Taft that a pardon was justified.

Accordingly, Bernarr Macfadden was pardoned, although he did not get back the two-thousand-dollar fine which had already been paid. He wanted it back. He still wants it back. The money meant nothing; the ruins of Physical Culture City had already cost him a hundred thousand dollars. But he wanted the money back because he felt he should not have been required to pay it.

If the reformers hoped they had taught Macfadden a lesson, they were again mistaken about him. He felt it was they needed the lesson. It was the same lesson he had been thundering for years; the lesson that was not fully to be learned until our men were drafted, and the army doctors learned the truth.

A weaker man would have been ready to give up the fight. But Macfadden was in earnest and he did not quit. Two years of worry and harassing doubt were gone; two years that otherwise he would have devoted to the development of his own city. The city itself was now a deserted village. The modest fortune he had made was wiped out. This was the result of his campaign for the health of the young men of his country; all this the fight against prudery had cost him.

All that remained to him out of the wreck was the magazine, *Physical Culture,* and the esteem of the public which had been consistently on his side throughout the court controversy.

All that remained to him was the magazine, and yet in that magazine, month after month and year after

year, he kept straight to his course, continuing to assail the same evils with the same intense and fierce conviction.

He did not quit. He believed, though few would have agreed with him then, that the greatest years of his life lay yet before him.

CHAPTER VII

The Years Between

To tell everything that Macfadden has done in his lifetime would be truly a hopeless task.

One would naturally wish to dwell on some of his celebrated fasting experiences, which attracted a great deal of attention in their time. Once he fasted for two weeks and walked up seven flights of stairs every day during the fast—two steps at a time, at that. But there is neither time nor space to do anything more than to indicate the main currents of his life; to pursue its general pattern and try to understand its broadest design.

There was that famous time, already mentioned, when he lived for five cents a day to the wonder of the New York populace. That was one of his most sensational undertakings and attracted a great deal of attention.

That was how his celebrated One Cent Restaurant came to be—he started it as an aftermath of that experiment.

Macfadden had secured a location quite close to the Bowery—the old Bowery that was, in the glad, bad Chuck Conners days. For one cent a man could buy a plate of hot soup, at the basement counter. For one

more cent he could buy a thick slice of bread. There was a one-cent plate of beans and a one-cent dish of cabbage. Nothing over one cent in the basement!

Upstairs there was a more aristocratic dining room, which was known as the Five Cent Restaurant. There, nothing cost more than a nickel. You waited on yourself, and you got good food for your money.

Two surprises awaited Macfadden in this curious undertaking.

One was that he had practically no customers at all for his basement.

In spite of the demonstrable fact that there was very little difference in the food—the upstairs place costing more, because of napkins and trimmings rather than anything else—in spite of the fact that many of the dishes were even identical, no one would eat in the one-cent lunchroom. They had too much pride. But they flocked upstairs, so that the five-cent place did a rushing business from dawn till midnight—and Macfadden learned about human nature from his restaurants.

The second surprise was that the restaurant was a financial success. In opening the enterprise, Macfadden's real intention was to show that the thing could be done on a break-even basis. At no time had he contemplated going permanently into the restaurant business or of making a profit out of it. Three others were opened subsequently in various parts of New York, and then the idea grew so that outside business

interests came in and opened such restaurants all over the country. In 1911, there were twenty physical culture restaurants. Meanwhile, Macfadden had relinquished any personal interest in them; he had greater interests clamoring for his attention, the idea was being commercialized, and the restaurants began to lose their popularity, although five of them, I believe, are still in operation.

Had Macfadden been able to continue his personal supervision of these establishments their success probably would have grown as most of his other enterprises have grown. I feel the more sure of that because I have eaten in the physical culture restaurants when they were being conducted solely according to his ideas. Their menus were extraordinary. One could buy a Hamburger steak, made of chopped nuts and vegetables, and have all the illusion of eating good bloody beef, without the danger of higher blood pressure afterward. The most tasty and cunning dishes were to be eaten there. A new vegetarian would never long for meat there, because all the health-giving foods, in combinations according to calories, had been worked out and prepared most appetizingly. The places were clean, the food was good, the prices were cheap, the idea sound—so sound that many other restaurants promptly appropriated some of the best physical culture features. As an old customer, I have always been sorry that Macfadden could not continue to direct those restaurants, and in many large Amer-

ican cities there must be thousands of others who feel the same way.

One would think that with his magazine, which demanded the greatest concentration from him, and with his restaurants, Macfadden's hands would have been too full for any other activities. In those same years he wrote more than twenty books dealing with various phases of health from the physical culture viewpoint, and he carefully and painstakingly supervised the monumental labor of issuing his five-volume Encyclopedia of Physical Culture. This is a truly huge compendium, and in its preparation, regular physicians assisted, including actually at least one professor from Johns Hopkins University. Macfadden was determined that his Encyclopedia should have academic authority, as well as the plain common sense with which he has always wished to approach his program of good health. The Encyclopedia will astonish anyone who looks through it.

Nor was this great project all. One of Macfadden's earlier enthusiasms was his Physical Culture Training School, which he opened soon after *Physical Culture Magazine* got into its forward stride. The school was on West Eighteenth Street—at 112 to 116—and hundreds of graduates went from its classrooms into colleges and universities, and elsewhere, teaching the Macfadden methods of physical development.

Meanwhile, as I have told you, he was deeply immersed in his health home experiments, which culmi-

nated in the building of Physical Culture City. In spite of the tragedy that caused that project to be abandoned, Macfadden was as intent as ever on carrying out the health home idea. So determined was he that within another few years he had opened a Physical Culture Sanitarium in Battle Creek, Mich., with a capacity of four hundred patients.

This institution became famous the world over. On its staff, Macfadden had trained medical doctors, all of them committed to the practice of drugless healing, heretics every one but all of them heretics whose orthodox training could not be questioned by their profession. The results obtained were gratifying, but Macfadden moved the business to Chicago that he might be free to begin a more ambitious sanitarium.

Here all his ideas about Physical Culture came to their fullest realization. What was known as the Bernarr Macfadden Healthitorium was the most complete establishment for the practice of drugless healing in all the world. The success of this place was phenomenal. Patients came from every part of America for Physical Culture treatment. Macfadden now found himself at the conduct of large affairs. His sanitarium was a large and successful enterprise, and meanwhile, in New York, his magazine and his book publishing interests were growing steadily and prosperously. His fame had gone all over the world; time and time again he sailed to Europe on lecture tours, and when he was in America, he commuted weekly between New York

and Chicago in order to keep his hand on the throttle of both these projects.

Then something wonderful happened to Macfadden. On the last of these trips to Europe, in 1912, there came into his life the belated element of romance. When he returned to America it was with an entirely new idea, an altered perspective, an enlarged ideal which he promptly carried into such a successful reality that he literally astonished the publishing world.

That romance was a wholly unexpected surprise in his life. Always a lonely man, and too often thoroughly misunderstood, he had come through an unhappy marital experience that left him all the more lonely, and all the more convinced that for him there was to be no real companionship in life; that he must go his chosen way in solitude, taking such comfort as he could out of his work. Once he had read where Carlyle had written, "Blessed is the man who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness."

Macfadden accepted that sophistry as his proper consolation, and at the age of forty-five was prepared to go through the rest of his life with his work to bless him and nothing more.

In order to stimulate a greater interest in physical culture during his lecture tour of the British Isles, Macfadden had announced a prize contest. One hundred pounds would be awarded to the most perfect specimen of English womanhood entered in the contest. This prize offer was announced in two magazines

which Macfadden then published in England—Macfadden's *Physical Development,* devoted to men, and *Beauty and Health,* for women.

Nearly five hundred beautiful English women sent in their photographs. The committee of judges was swamped, and the difficulty of a decision increased with each new bag of mail. Finally, twenty-five were chosen as being possibly eligible for the prize, and it was decided to pay the expenses of these twenty-five to London, so that the judges could make their final decisions, face to face.

The five judges consisted of an artist, a physician, a physical director, a newspaper reporter and Bernarr Macfadden.

As it developed, their task was not an easy one. Before them stood twenty-five of the most beautiful women that the eyes of any judges anywhere had ever looked upon. For here was a particular kind of beauty, a very special kind of beauty. Health, and muscular development, counted in this contest as well as a classic perfection of features. Complete beauty and health were demanded of the winner. That was the great idea behind the contest; there was no room for the slinking loveliness of pale and anemic night-blooming flowers. The glad and radiant beauty of out-of-doors, of good blood and good digestion, of force and strength, as well as charm and grace, must be there. The one hundred pounds would go only to an athletic beauty.

Mrs. Bernarr Macfadden, formerly Miss Mary Williamson, then winner of the British "Most Perfect Woman" prize contest.

A glimpse of the Nyack home.

This, of course, was a part of Macfadden's creed; it was the point he was trying to drive home to the English public; it was the idea behind the entire competition.

One by one the contestants were eliminated, until only a few of the most perfect, the most beautiful, remained. The judges went into serious conference. They held a prolonged discussion. But finally their decision was unanimous.

The prize of health, of beauty, of being the loveliest woman in all England, was awarded to Miss Mary Williamson.

It was not Mary Williamson's first experience as a winner in a competition. Far from it. She had won more than sixty trophies in various athletic contests before she sought the Macfadden prize for health and beauty. At that time, Mary Williamson was one of the champion swimmers of England, and she was also an expert runner. Subsequently, Macfadden offered a prize to any woman in England who could defeat this modern Atalanta in running, but no one ever accepted the challenge.

Before Macfadden's lecture tour was over, Miss Mary Williamson was Mrs. Bernarr Macfadden.

From the beginning, they were great companions, great friends, as well as being deeply in love, one with another. Here, indeed, was a curiously happy honeymoon. Both bride and groom were fervidly interested in physical development. Naturally, Mrs. Macfadden felt she was now the wife of the greatest master of

the particular world to which she most intimately belonged. And Mr. Macfadden felt he had found love itself bodied forth for him at last in physical perfection. In the mornings they would run a mile together, just to get an appetite for breakfast.

The rest of the lecture tour was thus turned into a honeymoon through the beautiful cities of Europe. They found a little apartment in Paris, and there they drank in of the ancient glories of that lovely place; they traveled here and there, and for the first time in his life, Bernarr Macfadden knew that he was happy.

Here, after many hard years, he had found a haven for his restless spirit. The woman beside him was that which no one else in all his life had ever been to him—a completely understanding friend. Instinctively she knew and fathomed him, where to others he had been a deep enigma. From the very beginning there had been a bond between them which they had not seemed to forge of themselves; perhaps an intuitive perception, each of what the other meant and hoped and wished for.

To Macfadden it was an almost unbelievable experience. Never had he believed that life could give him this miracle. The boy on the farm, in the hotel, tramping down the roads, working in the mines, desperate merely to keep himself alive, fatherless, motherless, had never known what now the man was knowing —the sense of perfect trust, of the peace that is born only of the right communion of man and his mate.

Small wonder, then, it seems to me, that under such circumstances, new dreams should stir in the heart of the physical culturist. There was in him a new courage, a new spirit, a new and eager desire to go forward. He had lived to see himself where he had most wanted to be; all his boyhood ambitions were now realized, and yet he thirsted after more struggles and more victories.

They had come, Mr. and Mrs. Macfadden, to a small village on the northern coast of France. One day they were walking by the sea and a long silence had fallen between them.

"Mary," said Macfadden, suddenly, "we are going back to America."

She had been expecting that. More, she had been hoping for it. He had told her so much of America, so much of that strange new city of New York, that she was eager to see it all.

"I have an idea," Macfadden continued. "I have a new idea—for a new kind of magazine. Until now, I have been a magazine publisher only for a special cause. But now I am going to be a real publisher. We are going to America and I am going to publish many magazines. And one of them is a brand new idea."

In his mind then was the germ of the most astonishing publication in the history of magazines—so conceded by its critics as well as its supporters.

Macfadden found the idea for *True Story Magazine* on his honeymoon.

CHAPTER VIII

The True Story of True Story Magazine

More than ten millions of people read *True Story Magazine* and its sister publications every month; possibly even many more than that. They continue to read it, and to believe in it most trustingly and most implicitly year upon year. What once was regarded by cynical observers in the publishing business as a short-lived novelty, has become, so it appears, a fixed necessity in millions of American houses.

What is the secret of its extraordinary popularity?

The answer to this question is quite apparent, and yet seemingly evasive—so much so, in fact, that a number of Macfadden's rival publishers have spent fortunes trying to find the answer in vain. They were looking for it everywhere except in the right place, which is naturally the contents of the book itself.

The popularity of *True Story Magazine* is first due to the fact that its readers believe that the stories in it are true. Mr. Macfadden will tell you that they are true, and his editors will tell you they are true, and the readers of the magazine will swear they are true.

Now the critics of *True Story Magazine* do not believe such earnest and incredible statements as that. They are too familiar with the publishing business to

accept what they regard as wholly preposterous claims. When Mr. Macfadden seriously declares that the stories in his magazine are written by his readers, these wiseacres smile. Some of them have even started rivals to *True Story Magazine.* Their first step invariably was to engage professional writers to imitate the stories in Macfadden's publications. Thus they invariably lost hundreds of thousands of dollars and none of them can ever understand why Macfadden's magazine is accepted and theirs rejected on the same newsstand.

That the stories in *True Story Magazine* could possibly be true never seems to enter into anyone's calculation. In trying to account for its baffling Jack-in-the-beanstalk success, they consistently ignore any such supposition. The idea simply will not be entertained by people who like to consider themselves intelligent. One can be *too* bright. When we go back to the genesis of the whole idea, we see that here is just where everyone in the publishing business has made a blunder, with the solitary exception of Macfadden. He turned the trick the others overlooked and thereby startled the world of printed words and now no one will believe him when he frankly discloses the whole secret of how he did it.

The whole situation has a glow of irony upon it.

Truth has always been an intruder in literature. It has been kicked upstairs and down by everyone who wrote or printed, in the last two thousand years. Long

before Pilate asked what truth was Tychiades, in his conversation on Liars and Lying, said to Philocles, "Sight-seers do not want the truth; they would not have it for a gift."

All of which is right enough. Through centuries, the narrative art had developed a certain method, a certain technique of its own. If one wanted to publish a magazine with stories in it, whether that magazine was called *Physical Culture* or the *Century*, whether it was a high-brow or a low-brow, or in between, it must conform to the principles of artistic narration.

What were those principles?

Well, one of the most important phases of the technique was that the stories must *convince*. They must create an illusion of reality. You as a reader must believe them. There could be no room for blind chance, for breath-taking coincidence, for incredibilities. You must have no improbability in your tale. All must be "motivated" and inevitable.

That was art, and to many it was far more, it was a finality.

Macfadden had heard all this, many times. Writers had come into his office and, taking pity on him, had explained it to him in great detail in order to show him just why he should buy their stories and print them in *Physical Culture Magazine*. Macfadden took their advice very seriously, although he could not take

their stories. And during long evenings, he had long talks about it with John R. Coryell.

"I cannot believe in all that," he told Coryell one night, with a sigh.

"Why not?" asked the master of the paper-backs with a smile, for John also had his doubts about the finality of such theories.

"Because I think it's a foolish and artificial idea. Look here!"

Macfadden was excited and a little incensed.

"What is a story for, anyway?" he demanded. "It may have one of two objectives—or even both. It is to teach you, is it not—to teach you life, human nature—all that? Or else its purpose is to take your mind off your everyday cares and make you feel you're living another kind of life. Isn't that about right?"

Coryell agreed that was about right.

"Very well," continued Macfadden. "I don't care about the stories told just for amusement. The writers and the technicians can do what they please about those, and they can formulate any theory they want for them. But the realistic stories about life are different. You can't make a technique about life in stories that is different from life as people have to live it."

"But that is just what is done," protested Coryell.

"It's all wrong. Every day life is full of coincidence—of the most dramatic coincidence. Yet, ac-

cording to this artificial technique, you can't have coincidence in a story."

"That's right."

"But *why?* I can't understand it."

Coryell grinned.

"Because people wouldn't believe in the coincidence, and would think the writer just put it in to get his characters out of a hole."

"I don't believe *that,*" said Macfadden. "I believe that people find such extraordinary coincidences in their own lives that they would recognize and confirm the naturalness of a coincidence in a true story."

Coryell smiled.

"The old adage, 'Truth is stranger than fiction,'" he quoted. "It's true enough. And I believe everybody knows it except magazine editors and writers."

"I guess that's about right," said Macfadden, a little abstractedly. He was thinking deeply, just then.

"Yes," continued Coryell, "it is one of the stock jokes of the regular magazine office. A woman will send in a story, and when the editor rejects it, declaring that the plot is incredible, she becomes hysterical and is ready to prove that every incident in the yarn actually happened in real life. And the editor tells her that doesn't interest him at all. It doesn't matter to him whether it really happened or not. It does matter, he says, whether people will believe it in a story. Fiction must be much more convincing than life," said

Coryell, who had his own sense of humor, leaned back and laughed softly.

"How does a man get to be an editor?" asked Macfadden suddenly.

Coryell stared at him blankly.

"I mean it," insisted Macfadden. "How do these men get to the place where they know just what their readers will believe and what they won't—just what they should have and just what they shouldn't. That's a great knowledge for a man to have."

"They guess, the best they can," explained Coryell, "and they follow their trained sense of literary values."

Macfadden said no more, just then, but he was thinking deeply about it, for many months afterward. The idea was still simmering in his head when he sailed for his English lecture tour. And on his honeymoon, he came to a decision about it.

He had never forgotten the public interest that he had aroused with his fateful story of "Wild Oats." Whatever the authorities had felt about it, the public had understood its intention and recognized its sincerity. Ever since that time, there had been coming regularly into the offices of *Physical Culture Magazine* letters from men and women reciting their own experiences. Most of them had the conscious ring of the public confession, such as is heard in a Salvation Army gathering, or in an old-fashioned testimony meeting of Southern camp religionists. The folly of transgression, the terrible effects of ignorance, the girls

who had not been warned by wise parents—a whole series of tragedies out of the American soil were falling, day after day, on the desk of the editor.

Many of these letters were published in *Physical Culture Magazine,* and Macfadden had noticed that these were the most popular contributions. More letters of comment were received about them than about any other single feature. They attracted more attention than any direct propaganda. Again Macfadden was brought face to face with the value of the parable.

The idea stirred long in his mind—the idea of an entire magazine devoted to confessions, to modern parables. Full well he recognized that such a publication would be bound to stir up old antagonisms. It would be the old fight all over again. If he dared to offer in the pages of a magazine, the lessons of life dramatized in the form of realistic stories, their moral implications made plain, the world would question his sincerity, and all the battalions of prudery would soon be on the march against him.

But Macfadden was still the zealot, still the evangelist, and now he felt possessed of an inspiration. He felt entirely satisfied that all the artificial barriers against the truth in stories were a mistake. What he had said to Coryell in that memorable conversation was now in his mind settling into a conviction. And he has always been a man who acts swiftly upon his convictions.

It was at a time of upheaval in the publishing business. The war and the many disturbances in the printing business, the disordered psychology of the public mind, had left editors and publishers blank, undecided and appalled. Many magazines were crumpling from huge circulations into decay and neglect. If ever a time seemed inappropriate for starting a new magazine, it was in the spring of 1919.

That winter, Macfadden had found the name for his magazine. *"True Story"*—he wrote the letters out on a blank sheet of paper, held it off from him, and tried to visualize a cover on the newsstands. He knew it was right.

When, however, he broached the subject to the executives of his organization there was but little support from them. During the war, *Physical Culture Magazine* had gone forward with amazing strides. The renewed interest of the public in strength and health was without precedent; the circulation was rapidly increasing and the staff wanted to devote its energies to advancing the fortunes of that great object and building it into an even bigger property.

Nevertheless, Macfadden announced that it was his intention to start *True Story Magazine* at the earliest possible moment.

His next move was to find an editor. John Brennan, who for a long time had been the active editor, under Macfadden's personal supervision, of *Physical Culture Magazine,* had left to go over to *Success,*

which was again being revived, since Orison Sweet Marden had found new capital for his great idea.

Macfadden offered Brennan the job as editor, and Brennan forthwith accepted.

"But there is one condition that I want to establish, right now," said Macfadden.

"Yes?" asked Brennan curiously. He will tell you, himself, that he was curious, for no man, no matter how long he has known Macfadden, can forecast what he will say or do next. "Yes, Mr. Macfadden?"

"The condition is," said Macfadden, "that the editor shall have nothing whatever to do with the selection of stories that go into the publication."

John Brennan blinked.

"What is the editor to do?" he asked, a little plaintively, for it is a natural weakness of editors to want to select their own material.

"Get the book out—on *time*," said Macfadden.

"But who *will* select the material?" pursued Brennan, feeling that the unexpected Mr. Macfadden was being far more unexpected than usual.

And then Macfadden unfolded an idea which made John Brennan gasp. It would make any editor gasp, and has made all the editors of New York gasp for the last five years.

Macfadden had come to the conclusion that for the type of magazine that he wished to publish, the editorial viewpoint would be fatal. No matter how sympathetic to a policy an editor might be, he could no

more discard his ideas on structure, on technique, on the artistic narrative quality, than a leopard could order a new spotless skin. What Macfadden wanted, what he felt his publication must have, was a wholly different basis of judgment.

His scheme had all the supreme audacity of simplicity. He meant to employ a number of young people, girls and boys, who knew nothing whatever about the publishing business. Their educational qualifications were not called into question; all that Macfadden wished to be assured by them was that they were already magazine readers and that they keenly enjoyed a good story when they found one. The more they knew about structure, the more they knew about literature, the quicker he told them that all the vacancies were filled.

Thus he organized his famous reading department, the like of which there never was, before, on land or sea.

Among them he found several traitors. One had taken a short story course through the mails. Another had completed the Pulitzer course in journalism. These were quickly expelled, although later such restrictions were removed, when the other qualifications outweighed such disadvantages.

These readers were given certain definite instructions. They were to look at the manuscripts with an eye single to but one quality—interest. If the stories interested them they were good stories. If they felt

bored when they read them, they were bad stories. That was their job, and the basis for all their comments on manuscripts.

In order to simplify the expression of their opinions, Macfadden next devised a system of rating which obtains today in the hundreds of thousands of manuscripts he receives annually; a system which has since been copied by many other publishing houses.

The readers were told that a 95% story was a passing mark. If they marked a story 95%, it meant they would have enjoyed that story, if they had paid for a magazine and found it in the table of contents. If it were marked 94½, it almost passed. A story marked 96% was excellent, 96½ super-excellent still—I think the highest rating ever made was 98.

In this system, Macfadden believes implicitly and profoundly, and today, when thousands of manuscripts must be read every week in his establishment, it is through a regiment of such extraordinary judges that they all must pass. His own editorials go the same route. From the very beginning, he made every effort so to separate the editorial and the reading departments that the editors and readers would remain actually unacquainted. This was to prevent even the subconscious partiality that comes out of friendships. An editor might want to see a certain manuscript published, but that was not possible unless this battery of unprejudiced judges found it interesting.

Having put into operation this curious and unheard

Macfadden training a class of Senators in Washington, D. C.

A good-natured extempore bout at the Capitol in Washington.

of mechanism, Macfadden announced that he, himself, would pass final judgment on available stories and that he would make up the contents of each issue.

There remained, then, only the problem of finding the stories.

This did prove to be a difficult problem. In the possession of *Physical Culture Magazine* there was a large *dossier* of those human, personal documents which Macfadden meant to be the bedrock of his new monthly. But others, many more, were urgently needed; a long supply in advance was essential, and Macfadden would not consider at any time the repeated suggestion that he turn to professional writers for his material.

What he wanted was stories from people who were not story writers, but who had suffered so smartly from experience that they could tell it with conviction and with fire. He did not care how crudely they might be expressed. In that very crudity he sensed the qualities of strength and conviction. Art was smooth and well-groomed but Macfadden had the same urge that drove the French realists to look inside the houses of the peasants and watch them live. Macfadden during his career had sat through many a polished, urbane address by some educated public speaker, and had been bored frantic by the ordeal. Also he had heard ignorant men at revival meetings, jumping and frenzied with the vivid reality of their own experience, cast a spell of dramatic power over an audience; great crowds

held fast by the fascination of a simple story, told with earnestness. That was the spirit he wanted in this new magazine, the revival spirit. He didn't want to modify it or to imitate it; he wanted the thing itself. He felt that sincerity could not be imitated, and that only the people who believed in what they were writing could give him the stories he desired.

Thus he approached the task of filling the pages of *True Story Magazine* with the clearest insight into its requirements. Advertisements were inserted in *Physical Culture Magazine,* calling for personal experiences. In the first number of the magazine, he began a prize contest, offering substantial awards to readers who would tell the true stories of their own experience.

"Of course," it is often remarked, "the stories, even if they are taken from what the readers send in, are rewritten in the office by hack writers. Anyone with any sense knows that."

Yet that is *not* the case. It is just the reverse of the truth. From the very outset of the magazine's career, the opposite rule prevailed. If there is one thing that will turn Bernarr Macfadden livid with rage it is to discover that an editor has been using a fancy pencil on a *True Story* manuscript. It fills him with an absolutely heroic and unreasoning indignation. He told John Brennan, as he has since told every subsequent editor of the magazine, that these true stories were to be printed just as they were written.

"Suppose they are ungrammatical?" asked Brennan, with a sigh.

Macfadden considered.

"You can fix the grammar," he conceded, not without a certain reluctance. "You can punctuate, and make the verbs agree with the subjects—but that's about all. I don't want these stories to have any polish that doesn't naturally belong to them. These stories should read just like people talk. That's just what I want."

The next question that arose was the method of illustrating the stories.

And here John Brennan had a new idea.

Why not illustrate the stories with photographs?

It seemed a daring new proposal then. Certainly, no one, least of all Macfadden, expected it to grow to its present extraordinary proportions. But Macfadden was bound up now, heart and soul, in his new project, and he wanted to put into it every striking feature at his command. Here was something that looked promising. Why have artists draw pictures? Why not try the new thing—the photographic illustration?

There were no studios, then, in which such pictures were taken. Today, illustration by photographs is a national industry, used not only by editors but by advertisers, the money spent upon such pictures running well into the millions every year. But these first pictures were taken in the editor's home, and the models were members of John Brennan's family. The

scenes were crude at first; not unlike the photographic song slides, popular some time before; in fact, Brennan may have got his idea from these song slides. If so, there was also another element which recommended their use in Macfadden's mind. That was the element of reality. He was about to publish a true story magazine, and such an idea could be projected in more appropriate spirit with photographs.

It is amazing to note how this particular idea has developed. There are several studios in New York today, devoted almost entirely to this kind of photography. A whole professional class of models has been evolved to pose in the pictures. Some of them are waiting for their chance to get into the movies. Others have failed in the movies and earn a living in this strange way. One of the early models for *True Story Magazine* was Norma Shearer. There were others, almost equally famous. And that was a matter of less than five years ago.

Today Macfadden owns his own studio, which is as well equipped as a young motion picture plant. Every kind of effect conceivable can be built on its various stages. More than three hundred models are employed there during the course of a week.

But that is today—about a decade after Macfadden launched his new magazine. There was no particular public excitement when the first issue appeared on the stand. Of the first issue there was printed about one hundred thousand copies, and about sixty

thousand copies were sold. That is the usual percentage of sales for the first issue of a magazine, and one hundred thousand gave the book only a fair distribution and display. But those who did buy copies of the first and the next few issues observed certain distinctive features about it. Those features seem simple enough now, in view of the success of the magazine, but they were entirely novel then. They were:

(1) The stories were represented as being true.
(2) Generally they were told in the first person.
(3) They attempted to teach a moral lesson.
(4) They were illustrated with photographs.

For a year, the magazine was continued without any particularly dramatic success. But meanwhile, Macfadden was working upon it as he was always wont to work upon everything he believed in, with all his might and main. He was aware that the first few issues had not been the realization of that magazine which he had contemplated; getting just the right material had been difficult. But gradually it began to come in to him, and the magazine underwent many changes during those beginning months. More and more it became like that which its creator had wanted from the first.

There was also another difficulty which Macfadden set himself to solve—the matter of serials. It was all very well to get his stories from his readers, but not one reader in ten million could write a serial story of book length, with installments ending in breathtaking suspense. That *did* require the cunning and

skill of a professional story writer. Yet Macfadden wanted serials in the same spirit as his short stories, and he wanted them very badly.

As a matter of fact here, again, he stood almost alone. The people with whom he talked told him that serials as circulation builders were no longer so important as they once were. Editors feel very superior nowadays to the old-fashioned installment ending, where the heroine was left, actually or metaphorically, hanging to a tree limb over the abyss. Why need he worry about serials?

Macfadden listened, but he did not believe. Even now he does not believe. His magazines, to this day, are jammed with serial stories, three and four in every issue. He has heard all the arguments against them. He has been told that a month between installments was too long for busy Americans to wonder what happened to the girl hanging over the abyss. The personality of famous authors, serializing their newest novel, might command a certain circulation, but not purely on the plot excitement alone.

Nevertheless, Macfadden believed in the serial principle, and certainly his magazine experience has justified him in this belief. He turned again to John R. Coryell, who wrote a number of continued stories for the new magazine; serials that were based on some actual happenings, some of them taken from short stories that had been submitted, and in which the editor saw the opportunity for expansion and development.

No one expected the new magazine to go very far, except Bernarr Macfadden and his old friend Coryell, who had become its advisory editor. These two had a faith in the project that was unshakable. It had need to be, against the battery of criticism turned against the idea by well-meaning advisors.

"It can't succeed," they told Macfadden.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because the American public today is buying *names*. Names of great authors. They want their stories trade-marked and guaranteed as to quality, just as they want their beans and their canned soups. Look at the *Cosmopolitan*. See the battery of names of authors and artists there on the cover. Why, it's like buying a Hall of Fame for twenty-five cents. Think of that, Mr. Macfadden—that for twenty-five cents the American public can buy the most popular authors. And think of the *Saturday Evening Post!* There they can get the greatest American writers for a *nickel*. And then look at *your* magazine—without a single name. All the stories are anonymous. Not a single famous name! Of course it can't succeed."

Doesn't the ring of that speech sound familiar?

How convincing is the voice that tells us we can't win!

The people who throw cold water on your ambitious schemes, always throw so logically. What answer could Bernarr Macfadden make to such a superior analysis of the chances of his own magazine!

He made the only answer he knew how to make, which was to continue putting out the magazine.

And then, one day, they woke up in the old offices down at 119 West Fortieth Street, which had been for a number of years the home of the Physical Culture Corporation.

The circulation department was trying to realize what was happening.

The boom had begun!

True Story Magazine was, in the vernacular of the trade, selling its head off! Each month after that there was a prolonged conference as to what the next print order should be. They must be cautious; no one knew how long this sudden growth would last—but they must not be too cautious, and stop its growth prematurely. By fifty thousands and by hundred thousands the magazine grew. In one year they gained one million circulation, almost at the rate of one hundred thousand a month.

Macfadden threw himself behind the business expansion of this enterprise with the same abounding vigor that he was putting into his very personal editing of the magazine. He was a dynamo of energy and fresh ambition. He started two new magazines, and many others followed in their train; I shall speak of them a little later. *True Story Magazine* was improving all the time. It was being printed on better paper, its illustrations were in popular rotogravure, and now there were immense national contests under way which

was bringing a flood-tide of strange stories, represented to be true, from all the states, and, indeed, from distant parts of the world.

In newspapers of all the principal cities, full page advertisements were run to accelerate the growth in circulation. The business management of *True Story Magazine* during those boom years was a fine example of good management, and Macfadden directed and passed on all that was done, although he gives great praise to his executives for their help at this crucial period.

Such a publishing miracle was bound to provoke opposition, immense and immediate.

Of course, Macfadden had counted on that from the beginning. He knew that his motives would be assailed, his sincerity questioned, because of the very nature of *True Story Magazine.* But he was determined that this time he would be able to prove his case, no matter how bitter the opposition against him.

Accordingly, he decided on another audacious move, a plan that will find no equal in the career of any other publishing house.

One day he sent out telegrams to a number of well-known clergymen; telegrams which read as follows:

"Dear Sir:

"I am publishing and editing a magazine called *True Story.* Its purpose is to teach the lessons of life in story form. In doing this I am forced naturally to

show the transgressions of humanity. I want to be sure that I am doing this in the best spirit of service, and I am asking you to help me make my magazine one of real helpfulness. Will you accept a place on a ministerial advisory board which I wish to establish? I promise you in advance that your advice will be taken. I undertake to see that every story, intended for publication in *True Story Magazine,* is submitted to you before purchase. If you find any story objectionable, that story will be rejected. If you consider a part of a story objectionable, that part will be eliminated. Can I count on your assistance?

"BERNARR MACFADDEN."

It was thus that the famous Macfadden Ministerial Advisory Board was created, and two weeks later it was in full running order, with the following personnel:

The Rev. Ralph Welles Keeler, D.D., pastor of Crawford Methodist Episcopal Church, New York City, chairman.

The Rev. Elliot E. Parry, of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The Rev. James H. Munro, of the Presbyterian Church, retired.

Rabbi Harris, of the Broadway Tabernacle, New York City.

And a Catholic priest, whose name has never been

disclosed, but who was actively in charge of a large New York parish.

Try as they could, the critics of *True Story Magazine* could not ignore that ministerial board. Its personnel was too important. The Rev. Dr. Keeler was one of the most conspicuous clergymen in the Methodist Episcopal Church. For many years he had been an assistant editor of the Methodist Book Concern and the Board of Publications of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was known as a tolerant, liberal, practical man, but with wholly orthodox views. Neither Keeler's sincerity nor his competence for such work was open to question.

The same was true of his associates. Rev. Dr. Munro had been for some years the chaplain of the New York Tombs. There he had seen enough to convince him that a magazine that would state the facts of life plainly and unmistakably was greatly needed in the country. In this, Rabbi Harris, whose social work is almost as well known as his scholarly studies in Jewish history, entirely concurred. Priest and rabbi and clergyman sat down at the same board, and made their own rules over a luncheon table at which no other member of the Macfadden offices was present.

That board has never received a single instruction from Macfadden. It has been free to follow what it conscientiously believed, first to last. Of course, there were disagreements among the clergymen themselves, but here the majority rule generally prevailed. From

the day the board was organized up until today, there has not been a story in *True Story Magazine,* nor in its allied publications, that has not borne the written approval of this group of ministers.

You may be sure that did not end the criticism, or the attacks of those who resented the frankness of the magazine. Nearly three thousand clergymen sent written endorsements of the magazine and its ideals, and that did not end the criticism, either. But it robbed the old antagonists of much of their ammunition. As a matter of fact, opposition to *True Story Magazine* generally ends when the critic reads a copy. The familiar "contempt prior to examination" is behind most of the criticism. Indeed, the stories are affirmatively moral in their tone, a sin always finds its sure retribution, and the whole structure is built on the most orthodox and religious view of human conduct.

Moreover, Macfadden feels that he is on firm ground when he declares that his magazine has been a good influence in literally millions of homes. The evidence which he has is meant to be convincing. In hundreds of thousands of letters received at the editorial offices, mothers have blessed the book for what it has done for them, and in these letters Macfadden takes a deep and grateful pride.

The success of *True Story Magazine* bewildered the publishing world. There had never before been such a gigantic growth in such a little time.

"When will it stop?" they asked. "When will it reach the point of saturation?"

Even Macfadden was tempted to ask that question, but the circulation manager retorted with the inquiry, "When will the Ford automobile reach the point of saturation?"

It seemed to be a fair enough retort. The sell-out of *True Story Magazine* continued to be a monthly miracle. On the fifth of the month, hosts of the blue-covered magazines, with the smiling girl's head, would be stacked high on the newsstands. Within a week they would be sold.

Here was an opportunity for competition, and it came quickly enough. Other publishers decided to get into the field. Of course, they didn't believe the stories in *True Story Magazine* were true; all one had to do, they figured, was to engage some hack writers and imitate the title. Thus they imitated everything about *True Story Magazine* except its contents; not one of them seems ever to have made the slightest effort to get a single true yarn between their covers.

But they did an immense amount of harm, some of these imitators. The sex-coy magazines of a few years previous, when snappy tales and naughty narratives were the rage, were now doddering wrecks. Their owners thought they saw a chance to recuperate their fortunes by imitating the style of this new young giant among the monthlies, and use up their same stories as before in a new dress.

It didn't work. The public knew exactly what it wanted, and Macfadden was giving it to them. The imitations have never made more than the most mediocre progress. But the cheap nastiness which they purveyed caused a great deal of misunderstanding. Their titles were similar to that of *True Story,* and the new magazine was often accused of all the seven deadly sins of its unscrupulous rivals.

Meanwhile, Macfadden was not idle. In a few years he brought out a sister publication to *True Story,* which he called *True Romances.* I think it is the only magazine in history which sold out its first issue; it reached half a million copies before the end of the year. *True Romances* assumed a character of its own. All romances are stories but not all stories are romances. *True Romances* has become a magazine of true tales of young love—a magazine of youth.

A little later Macfadden published *Dream World,* which was a magazine of dreams that came true—of faithful lovers and passionate loyalties. *Dream World* laid less stress on the grim tragedies of life; it was full of a popular kind of sweetness and light, and while the moral lessons were there, it was more a book of young love stories. Finally, in 1924, he brought out *True Experiences,* dealing particularly with stories told by girls in business life.

Macfadden reads every story that goes into these four magazines; he writes editorials for them as well as for *Physical Culture,* and for his other publications, in

addition to laboring daily over the success of his several daily newspapers, and writing many editorials for them.

There is much more, you see, than I have already told, of what Macfadden has done and is doing. Before passing to his later activities, and to those other magazines, it may be well to pause and contemplate for a moment how much he had done with this True Story idea, in such short time.

When the magazine was first offered to magazine wholesale distributors, one of the more experienced men in the business, who was also one of the directing forces in the American News Company, said: "Macfadden has the first new idea in the publishing field in the last fifty years."

That it was a sound idea has been amply demonstrated. And yet it was inevitable that it should have come to him. The origin of *True Story* lies directly in Macfadden's previous physical culture career.

I truly believe that Macfadden's greatest satisfaction out of *True Story Magazine* comes from his profound belief in the good it is accomplishing in the welfare of the race. It is hard to make a flat statement like that, in the teeth of the attitude with which it is usually received. Yet I do believe it, after a long and close association with the man. That is the element in the whole enterprise that matters to him most intimately and dearly.

For years he had seen those letters coming in to

him; letters that would move the emotions of the most sophisticated. And where the most sophisticated might rationalize the whole thing, might ease the ache such letters aroused in them by reasoning that they were beyond help, Macfadden did want to help them, because Macfadden is above all things else in the world quite innocent of sophistication. At least, he believed, if these people were beyond help, others might profit by being brought face to face with their dire extremity, they might take heed of such examples.

Out of his conviction that frankness would end such misery, Macfadden had long ago invented an epithet. To him it had all the force of an imprecation. That epithet was "Comstockery!" This *True Story Magazine* was his answer to "Comstockery" and all for which, in his mind, that epithet stands.

They are very simple stories. Time and time again Macfadden has been told by editors who were sincere in their convictions that the magazine needed more variety; that the stories lacked construction; that a time would come when the diet would pall. But he continued and continues to believe that the freshness of truth is persistent, and he hews closely to his original policy, with what result the smallest newsdealer in America can inform you.

To offset the gradually increasing charge that the stories were not true—a charge continued in spite of the fifty thousand dollar contest aimed directly at the readers of the magazine—Macfadden subsequently in-

troduced a new ruling. All stories must be supported by an affidavit of the contributor that the incidents really occurred, either in his own experience, or of someone with whom he was personally acquainted. This affidavit must be accompanied by character references which are investigated. Before a story is offered as true in the pages of *True Story Magazine,* it is submitted to severe scrutiny, from many angles. Every name is changed, and every location, so that no one's reputation can be damaged by indiscreet disclosure. In spite of this, it is hard to convince the skeptical high-brows that the stories have any actual relation to life. Only the millions who buy the magazine, and who think by its precepts and advice, believe that it is just what it offers itself to be—a book of modern parables, out of a life which they know to be their own kind. In discussing the growth of this whole idea recently, Victor Rousseau, the novelist, said:

"Let us look at the issue frankly. Let us have done with the unpleasant fiction invented during the Victorian epoch that young girls are creatures ignorant of sex instincts and impulses—a fiction that has done more harm than all the salacious literature that has ever been published.

"Let us admit frankly that the subject of sex is the one overmastering curiosity of youth of both sexes—as it is—and that the prurient pretenses and evasions and denials of convention simply disarm youth and leave it helpless to the sword of experience.

"Let us acknowledge that the unwillingness of parents to speak to their children upon these subjects arises from a deep-set feeling that is perhaps not wholly evil, and let us deplore that civilized nations have no initiation lodges and ceremonies for the instruction of adolescent girls and boys, as savage races have.

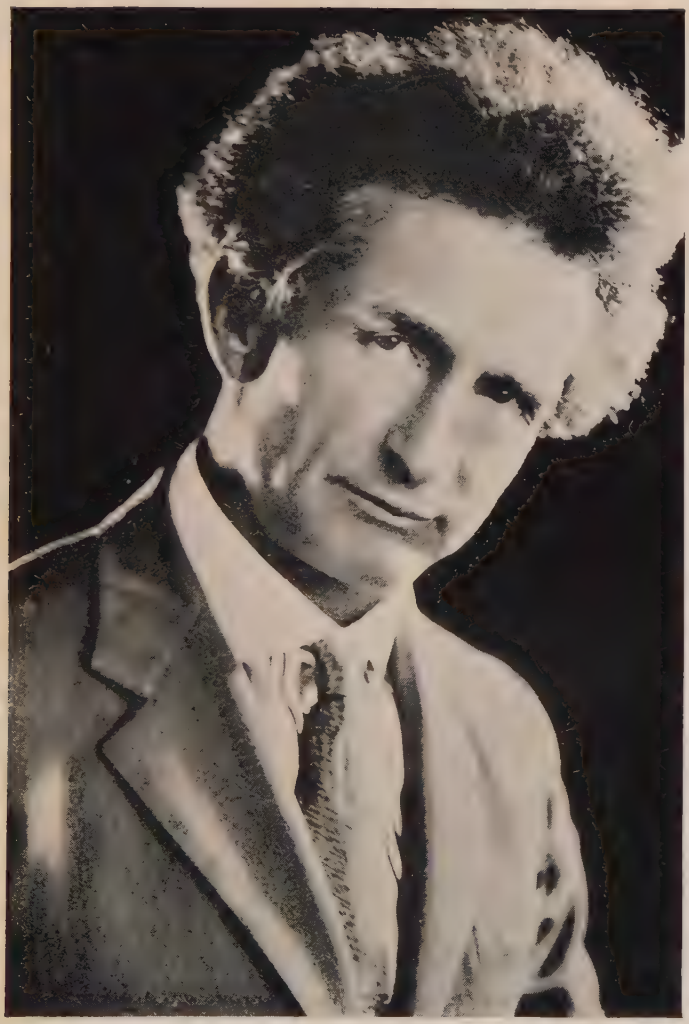
"Let us go back to the wholesome frankness of Shakespeare, whose heroines were innocent without the least flavor of ambiguous ignorance.

"And let us prescribe a drastic purgative for the Comstock type of mind, to be followed by a complete dose of Havelock Ellis, for enlightenment.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the warnings inculcated by the stories in these magazines have saved many human beings from ultimate ruin of body and soul.

"Thousands of ministers of every creed throughout the country have written to endorse the policy of the Macfadden Magazines. It is true that the average country clergyman is, in general, not a sophisticated man. Perhaps for that very reason he is in closer touch with the mind of the average unsophisticated reader than the 'highbrow' publisher with a business grudge."

In all the hectic days when *True Story* was having its amazing growth, Macfadden was occupied with other great projects, some of which achieved a high degree of success, and others of which went down to



Bernarr Macfadden as he is today.

Bernarr Macfadden and his five daughters on the Boardwalk at Atlantic City enjoying the recreative spirit of that resort.

failure. At one time he was publishing fourteen magazines. Today the list is smaller, but their foundation is much more secure. Nor is he through with experimenting by any manner of means. I know of at least half a dozen new publications, two of them, at least, of great originality, which Macfadden intends to issue as soon as he "finds the time," as he expresses it.

After *True Story,* he issued a new magazine which he called *"Brain Power."* Its full title was *"National Brain Power Pictorial Monthly,"* and it is one of the real tragedies in Macfadden's career. Its idea was excellent; it was to serve as a mental help in the same way that Macfadden's first magazine was a physical help, to the individual who wanted to improve himself. In those days the self-advancement idea was just sweeping in full tide over the country. Everybody was taking a course in some subject or another. Thus *"Brain Power"* had a ready-made audience waiting for it, and could easily have made for itself a secure place in the field, if it had been carefully safeguarded. From the beginning, however, it suffered from disagreements in policy, a change in its methods, attack and material, from month to month. Had its original idea been pursued, according to the plan originally conceived by Macfadden, the success of the magazine might have been assured. It tried to cover too general a field; had it been concentrated on its own special province, thousands upon thousands would have continued to support it; from the very first its advertisers found it

one of their best paying mediums. There are many who still hope that Macfadden will revive his *"Brain Power"* magazine, for in some of the features it was uniquely satisfying. It had a checkered three years of existence, but it also had the merit of a real idea, which was never properly expressed.

About the same time—in 1921—Macfadden also issued a new magazine called *"Beautiful Womanhood."* This was an ambitious project. Many excellent writers contributed to its pages; it was there that Anzia Yezierska's "Salome of the Tenements" first saw the light of day, as a serial, and there were many other competent contributors, including Richard Barry, Thyra Samter Winslow, and others who have since made sound literary reputations. The magazine caught on, and its circulation was steadily increasing. But it, too, suffered from mistakes in policy, and from the fact that the immense growth of *True Story Magazine* was so absorbing the energies of the entire staff that it could not be properly developed. This, too, was finally abandoned.

Other magazines which were started and which had a quick growth, but which were discarded because their further development faced definite limitations, were *"Movie Weekly"* and *"Midnight."*

There were still other publications which Macfadden started, however, which are forging ahead with truly gratifying promise. One of these was *"True Detective Mysteries."* Here Macfadden applied his true story

idea to a highly specialized field. The popularity of the detective story needed no argument; the sale of such magazines and of detective and mystery novels was, and continues to be, enormous. But whether the public would read stories of actual crimes, dramatized in interesting narrative, but *not* fictionalized, was a broad question. Macfadden decided to try the experiment. He put out a monthly magazine, illustrated with photographs—in many cases actual pictures of criminals, victims, scenes, documents, weapons, etc.—and his editors proceeded to develop a type of writer who could present a story of crime and its solution in a straightforward manner, yet in a style which would be just as interesting as the lurid tales then and now being offered to the public as detective and mystery yarns.

The result justified Macfadden's belief in the idea. The magazine caught on, almost from the start. Certain serials published in those earlier issues—"The Mystery of the Vanished Priest," "A Game With Death," and others—are still being talked about. The magazine, *"True Detective Mysteries,"* is an unqualified success, and there are many who believe it will reach the million mark before it stops growing. Meanwhile, the idea has spread.

By this time the true story idea was being taken up everywhere. Newspapers all over the land were publishing true stories from life and assuring their readers that truth was stranger than fiction. True stories be-

gan to appear even in the most literary magazines. It was curious, too, that the modern craze for biography began in America just about a year after Macfadden started his new magazine. It was almost as if he had sensed in advance the turn away from fiction to the more palatable dramatization of fact which has now become a national taste.

Macfadden also purchased the hapless old *"Metropolitan"* magazine, out of bankruptcy, but even he could not breathe the breath of life into such a cadaver. It was dropped quickly enough. For a while he published *"Muscle Builder,"* but following the advice of his business department he subsequently incorporated this into *Physical Culture Magazine.*

Among the other publications which he let go were *"Your Car"* and *"Sport Life"* and *"Modern Marriage,"* while others which he started, and which seem in a fair way to succeed, were *"Your Home"* and *"The Dance."*

His latest experiment is *"Ghost Stories."* Editors have always held a prejudice against the supernatural type of story, and as Macfadden has learned to distrust the judgment of editors and business advisors, he decided to start a magazine devoted to the supernatural. Already it has found its public.

During all this exciting period, Macfadden was also in direct control of his business interests, and nothing was ever done without the fullest conference with him. He was, in actual fact, publisher, editor, and

business manager of all his interests. These are not the sum total of his activities, for he was still interested in various projects, and was even patenting a number of inventions.

But all this activity was as nothing compared with the next great ambition which was stirring within him.

Macfadden was making up his mind to become a newspaper publisher, and it is of this singular adventure that I have now to tell.

CHAPTER IX

The Story of the Graphic

Here is certainly one of the strangest episodes in the history of American Journalism.

The *New York Evening Graphic* is like no other newspaper that ever was before. To estimate it with fairness is not an easy task. All that can be said against it has been said, with bitterness and denunciation, time and time again. I have already pointed out that it was the *Graphic* which made the tabloid a public issue, and stirred up some of our self-acknowledged serious thinkers to a hot degree of indignation. Only in its own columns has its defense been plainly uttered, and, as usual, most of its detractors are not acquainted with that defense for they do not seem to find the time to read the paper which they criticize.

That the *Graphic* has made mistakes cannot be gainsaid by any fair-minded man. That some of the criticism directed against it is justified is not open to denial.

But that the paper has also done some good things is apparently quite generally unknown to its critics. They are seemingly not aware, also, that the paper is a distinct force for good with its readers, and potentially a sound and wholesome influence in the metropolis.

What is more important, the *Graphic's* critics do not

realize that behind the project is actually a notable ideal, which is, I am now convinced, far nearer to a genuine expression than ever before.

I hope and believe that the day is coming when the *Graphic* will take its honorable and even distinguished place in the city, representative at last of the ideals which its creator held when he brought it into the world.

One of his closest associates said to Macfadden, during the height of the storm which the *Graphic* had aroused because of its treatment of a celebrated marriage scandal:

"Mr. Macfadden, the *Graphic* will write your epitath—and if you are not careful, it will not be a true one."

Anyone familiar with the circumstances will testify that Macfadden had a sound and fine idea in starting the *New York Evening Graphic* in New York. For a long time, a daily newspaper had been his great dream. Back in the first days of the *True Story* boom, he confided that ambition to me.

"Some day," he said, "I am going to publish a newspaper in New York, and it will be a different newspaper from any that they have ever seen."

It was only a few years later that this dream became a reality. Early in the summer of 1924, Macfadden purchased the old building and equipment of the *New York Evening Mail* and told his executive associates that he intended to begin the publication of his newspaper early in the autumn.

Those were thrilling and exciting days in the magazine offices, while the large force that is needed for a daily was being mobilized. It was truly a titanic undertaking, involving many millions of dollars. Day after day the work went on. The key men at the heads of the various departments were chosen—the advertising, the circulation, the various mechanical divisions and, more important than any others, the editorial department.

Macfadden prepared a full-page newspaper advertisement which subsequently appeared in all the New York dailies. In that advertisement Macfadden said, among other things:

"I intend to publish a paper that is human all the way through.

"This paper will be different from any that you are now reading.

"It will smash precedents to smithereens.

"The *Graphic* is the first tabloid newspaper with a serious purpose behind it.

"I expect to differ materially with the average newspaper editor as to what constitutes news."

This program, as Macfadden then proceeded to amplify it, thrilled Gauvereau and he plunged in with a hearty enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, Macfadden was holding frequent conferences with his new executive staff and was expressing himself very plainly as to just what sort of paper he had in mind. In many respects his ideas were new,

advanced and important; they were sound and should have placed a stamp of distinction on the paper from the very start.

"What were these ideas?" asks the skeptic, having looked at the paper and found it wanting.

First—and what else would Macfadden put first?—was his health page, or, as he instructed it be called, his Physical Culture page. Here was something for which he stood, and to which his paper could give adequate and helpful expression. He wanted every phase of health treated on that page, so that its readers could absorb into their daily routine the health program which was and is still to Macfadden the most important thing in the world.

Here, surely, was a first-rate feature for the new paper, justifying Macfadden's claim that it was the first tabloid newspaper with a serious purpose. More than that, he instructed the city editor to emphasize health values whenever a story developed that seemed to have a health moral behind it.

This was the first great plank of Macfadden's personal editorial program; it was a fine foundation stone, but it has been over-looked because of more obvious defects that have obscured it.

Next, Macfadden had an infinitely greater idea, and one much more difficult of putting into execution. This was what he called editorializing the news.

"I am not in sympathy," he told Gauvereau, "with the modern, impersonal, machine method of news-re-

porting. I think that is what is making so many of our newspapers dull and stale. The reporter has a right to put himself into any story that goes into *The Graphic,* if the facts warrant it. I want the moral implications of a story emphasized, so that the *Graphic* will be put into the hands of son and daughter by any mother in New York."

Macfadden's critics may smile at that, but he meant it, and he still means it, from the bottom of his heart—and his idea, as he then proceeded to explain it to his managing editor, was as old as the parable and as new as *True Story Magazine.*

"For example," continued Macfadden, "let us suppose that a girl is attacked and beaten, after an automobile ride, and that the police are searching for her assailant. That is the story as the average newspaper would present it. But let us do the different thing. Let us dig into the moral values. Let us go see the mother of the girl and ask her if she had ever warned this young girl against going out with questionable young men, and in particular this fugitive who attacked the girl. If the mother says she has, and the girl refused to listen to her, you have a moral lesson right there that every mother in New York will be glad to show to their children. On the other hand, if the mother did not warn the girl, there is a moral lesson for the mothers themselves."

Macfadden's idea, although, at that time, he had not completely formulated it, was far more sweeping.

Behind every crime that gains prominence in the press, he was sure there were lessons of value to the public. Upon those moral values he wished to place the emphasis of his news reports, so that crime news in his paper would assume a constructive and undeniable value.

No one knew better than Macfadden the value and importance of such a reform in reporting, and no man knew less than he the danger of trying to make it a practicality.

He did not know then the lack of judgment that is often found in a young reporter who is ambitious and who has been given an idea. Macfadden had a whole staff of such reporters. What he neded for the proper development of such a big idea as he had was a staff of men of the calibre of Irvin S. Cobb, or Fannie Hurst—a million dollar staff of writers who could editorialize the news and make it truly significant. Perhaps they had need to be only lesser Cobbs and Hursts, but some of that quality of sympathy, of penetration, of detached observation they needed, if his idea were ever to be realized.

It has never been realized, of course, but he is nearer to it now than ever before; nearer to it all the sooner, perhaps, because of the many mistakes that were made in trying to reach it.

And in doing that, Macfadden did develop one news writer of the quality he wanted—if he could get a few more like him, all New York would be reading the *Graphic* in preference to any other daily in New York.

I shall not name the man, for that would be unfair to him, but I shall tell you something of his amazing experience, and of his meeting Macfadden, and perhaps it may help you to understand Macfadden and his newspaper a little better.

There walked into Macfadden's office one morning a tall, youngish man, with hair prematurely white. Macfadden, always interested in the physical well-being of everyone he meets, at once asked:

"What made your hair turn grey so soon?"

"Prison," answered the man promptly.

"You were in prison?"

"Three times!"

"What for?"

"Bank burglary!"

Macfadden sat up straighter.

"You were a bank burglar?"

"One of the best in the business," answered the man with a shrug. "I suppose I have robbed as many banks as any other man in the business."

"How long were you in it?"

"About fifteen years."

"And what are you worth today?"

"Not a nickel. That's why I am here. Mr. Macfadden, I know more about this crime wave than anybody whose articles I've read in the papers or magazines so far. If you will pay me for what I know, I can tell one of your writers the facts—and you'll have the real goods."

"Tell me something about it," suggested Macfadden.

For an hour the stranger talked. His language was picturesque, and far from academic. Macfadden had much to do, but he let it all wait, he cancelled one appointment after another, just to listen to the bank burglar.

"And now, Mr. Macfadden," pleaded the man when he had finished, "will you buy my story and get one of your men to write it up."

"No," said Macfadden, "but if you will write it, I will print it."

"I don't know how to write."

Macfadden grinned.

"Neither do any of the contributors to my *True Story* magazines," he assured the former bank burglar. "All they know is that part of life which they have experienced. You don't have to know how to write to understand life, you know? Now you understand more about crime than anyone I've ever heard talk before. Just talk on paper—and I'll print it."

The man reluctantly assented. Strange as it may seem, the story that he turned in, "The Life Story of a Bank Burglar" created a sensation in *True Story Magazine,* as did many subsequent stories that he told there. And when the *Graphic* was started, Macfadden thought of this man.

Not long after the paper made its bow, there was a sensational murder and hold-up case in New York, involving men who were called the Diamond brothers.

They were to be executed. Now if there is one thing which Macfadden disbelieves in even more heartily than prudery, it is capital punishment. He sent this man to watch the electrocution of the Diamond brothers and report it for the *Graphic*.

The day that story appeared, one of the most conservative and dignified book publishers in New York bought a copy of the *Graphic* and read the Diamond brothers electrocution story. He staggered up from his breakfast table, white in the face.

"My God," he exclaimed, "Zola couldn't have made it more real to me. I never knew an electrocution was like that. My God—it's awful!"

Many such stories from that man have since appeared in the *Graphic*. They, too, have not escaped the condemnation of the paper's critics; they have been called repulsive and sordid, but they have never been more sordid and repulsive than the matters of which they treated. These stories represent a distinct achievement, and one of the genuine expressions of what Macfadden wants to make the *Graphic*. When he finds the editors to project his ideas, and the writers to interpret them, the *Graphic* will be one of the most interesting papers ever published.

Macfadden also wanted to make his paper as helpful to his readers as he possibly could. Naturally, every publisher has that idea, but Macfadden sought out new ways to bring it about. It was his idea to send a woman from shop to shop and publish the best

bargains obtainable—as a strictly editorial matter. Bargains he regarded as news, although the advertising manager turned white in the face when he told him so. That feature is one of the most interesting in the paper; the first editorial treatment of merchandise that I have found in any metropolitan daily.

Also it was Macfadden who endorsed the organization singing classes, led by competent teachers for the readers of the *Graphic;* and free ukelele lessons in classes and in the columns. Here also was a tabloid with musical criticism, book criticism, and art news. This was again his idea—to make a *complete* tabloid newspaper.

Another novelty which he introduced, and subsequently abandoned, although its success merited its continuance, was a new form of dramatic criticism. He invited a different reader each night to accompany the critic to the show, and to express his opinion in the paper freely. Thus, side by side with the regular critic—Walter Winchell, whose column in the *Graphic* has made him a real reputation—was the opinion of the man in the street.

From the first the new tabloid involved itself fiercely in crusades for the public weal. Some of these were successful, others were not; some, I think, were ill-advised. When the paper was but one month old, it began an exposeé of the operations of bucket shops. As a direct result of this campaign, so the managing editor assured me, certain operators were barred from the

United States mails, and their elaborate offices in the Wall Street district were closed.

The paper also propounded a unique solution of the congested subway problem. Macfadden, designed, and patented a double-deck subway car, with nearly twice the capacity of the present models. He stood ready to demonstrate that the car could be installed without raising the ceiling or lowering the roadbed—and some engineers commended the idea as practicable. Nothing came of it, at the time, but only recently I heard that the idea was being seriously considered, in the muddle of transportation difficulties which is so embarrassing the city fathers.

Only a month or so later, the *Graphic* set the town laughing by its exposure of one of the greatest publicity hoaxes ever staged. Every one will remember the "heroic dash" of the Polar dogs to Nome, Alaska; of the praise heaped upon Balto, that noble hound who dragged the sled, laden with serum, to the community shivering in the face of an epidemic.

Macfadden read the stories in the newspapers about that affair—with what disgust the reader may well imagine.

"In the first place," he said, "the serum is worthless. In the second place, if they thought they had to have it, why didn't they send it by airplane, if the train couldn't get through? Why all this hocus-pocus of sending the filthy stuff up there by dog sled?"

He telephoned the editor and told him to investigate that story down to the bottom of the barrel.

The editor soon made an astonishing discovery. It was the established fact that the serum dashers had refused the offer of airplanes, and had *insisted* on the dog-sled method of reaching Nome. Finally, the *Graphic* established that there was not even such a dog as "Balto" in the sled-team that did go to Nome. According to the Graphic, the whole thing was a publicity stunt, engineered by serum manufacturers.

And yet, if you will take a walk through Central Park, you will find a statute erected to the heroic "Balto" for all New York to pass reverently and remember.

I am merely seeking here to tell some of the things which the *Graphic* has done which have quite escaped the attention of those critical people who believe it has created a situation calling for reform. There was, for example, the annual prize for the most notable achievements of civic organizations; an encouragement to civic improvement of which any newspaper might be proud.

Now what are the features of the *Graphic* which have aroused such unqualified opposition from so many sources?

First and foremost, beyond any question, is the "composite photograph."

Here the new little paper blazed an original trail, certainly, but for a while it seemed as if that trail were

leading to its own undoing. The idea was vivid, simple and sufficiently engaging to attract public interest at once. When a startling news event occurred, and there were no pictures available, the art department proceeded to make a pictorial representation of the event. There was no deception about it. The picture was frankly presented as a "composograph." And, used judicially, it does possess interesting possibilities.

For instance, let us assume that a huge ocean liner is sinking at sea. The news is tragic, startling, of world-wide interest. The tabloid is a picture paper and it has no pictures of the disaster. In the art department, skilled retouchers get to work and by assembling, photographing and rephotographing, they produce a composite picture which makes vivid to the eye the reality of the catastrophe.

One of the oldest newspaper authorities in America is already on record as saying that the composite picture is here to stay. There are some events that cannot be illustrated in any other way, because no camera was near when the event occurred. And whether we like it or not we must assent to the fact that this is an age of pictorial journalism.

But some of the adventurous young men, left alone at night in the *Graphic* art department so abused this novel principle as to bring the paper under a fire of criticism. Macfadden was the first to realize the mistake that was being made and to order it promptly stopped. But the damage was already done in many

Some of the Macfadden Magazines.

The Macfadden Newspapers.

minds, and it was some months before the ill-effects of those mistakes were overcome.

You will still find composite photographs on the front page of the *Graphic* and some of them are very interesting; others are amusing, even to the most sophisticated. When the dapper mayor of New York made a trip to Venice, the *Graphic* published a composite photo of Mr. Walker riding in a gondola down the grand canal. It was worth the price, just to see that picture.

Upon nothing in all his career has Macfadden so pinned his faith as he has clung to his dream of the daily newspaper. He is implacably determined to make the *Graphic* into a journal of real and lasting influence in New York homes, and recently he has undertaken its personal supervision with an energy and determination that is already showing results. The paper today is vastly different than when it started. The most casual survey of its pages is ample demonstration of the changes he is making in it. More and more it is becoming a newspaper, full of the news of the day told succinctly, clearly and completely; for that was his first idea—a tabloid newspaper that was complete. And again, more and more, you will find in it that moral emphasis in crime news which makes it of constructive value to its reader, instead of a mere pandering to morbid curiosity, which is one of the defects of human nature, above which man is seeking to rise.

More than once Macfadden has been able to show

the injustice of the attacks made upon his paper. An attempt was made to prove that the *Graphic,* and the other two New York tabloids, were devoted to and principally made up of crime news, and of deeds of violence and bloodshed. Under the New York code such a publication is illegal. Macfadden was able to show that the *Graphic* carried less crime news than any other paper in the city; less, not only in actual space but also in proportionate space. The old line newspapers, which had been vituperative in their attacks on tabloids, were aghast at the tabulated figures, taken from their own columns, in contrast with the *Graphic.*

Then Macfadden issued a characteristic challenge which really made some of his contemporary critics quite ridiculous.

It was at the time of a particularly atrocious murder trial which was engaging the attention of the entire country. A woman and her lover had killed the woman's husband most brutally. His head had been crushed with a sash-weight. Both the man and woman were tried simultaneously for the murder. The affair came quickly on the heels of the revived Hall-Mills murder case in New Jersey; a trial which had enlarged the circulation of all newspapers. In anticipation of great public interest, the newspapers were now making elaborate preparations for covering the newest sensation.

Macfadden came out with an editorial in which he offered to print only brief stories, the barest facts, of

the new murder trial, if the other newspapers would agree to do likewise. He quoted their own editorials about crime news, and invited them to join him in ignoring the Snyder-Gray case. There was no response, except that the other newspapers went on busily with their preparations to have special writers, preachers, actors, and what-not write special accounts of the case.

Macfadden called the attention of his readers to the fact that the other newspapers, in spite of their high-sounding phrases about the ethics of journalism, refused to be reticent about this bloody murder case. Also he referred to the fact that his sincerity in making the challenge had even been questioned. He therefore announced that, even if it cost the *Graphic* something in circulation, there would be no elaborate trial stories in its pages. Only the simple facts would be printed, he said. He kept his promise. I do not think more than five hundred words a day were printed about the case in the *Graphic*.

This was by Macfadden's order. It came about because, realizing the fight that he had on his hands, he had taken the editorial steering wheel into his own hands, so that his own charted course should be followed from then on. Since that time, the *Graphic* has seemed like a different paper; one that is certain to make its place among the New York millions.

Take up a chance copy today and you will find an earnest, serious, sensational and amusing paper, with

all the news boiled down and presented in concentrated form. The worst that can be said against it is, that it is a paper for the masses and more than that it has never tried to be. Upon turning its pages, one finds that the first half of it—eliminating the advertisements—is given over to a display of the news of the day. Then there is a woman's page, a physical culture page, two story pages, a radio page, a theatrical page, a movie page, sporting pages, features and the back page given over to editorials.

Now, as the editorials are supposed to reveal the policy and spirit of a publication, let us have a look at them. There is in this particular issue, one on "Gold Star Mothers," and the cynic will immediately expect to find a maudlin tribute to the mothers of dead soldiers. Instead, we find a plea that an armistice be declared in the deaths of children from speeding automobiles, and pointing out that mothers who lose their children to such recklessness have no gold stars but only empty cribs. Then there is a common-sense editorial on "Clean Sport" following the four-game World Series. And finally there is a boxed, double-columned editorial by Macfadden entitled "Why Not Annul Foolish Laws?"

When it is remembered that an editorial by Macfadden appears every day on this page, in addition to the dozen personally dictated ones that go into his magazines every month, and that these editorials are done while he is actively in charge of the editorial and busi-

ness supervision of his whole business, some idea of the man's extraordinary energy and industry may be obtained. Because this particular editorial is typical of what he says, day after day, to the readers of the *Graphic,* I am reprinting it here:

"Why Not Annul Foolish Laws?"

"Every new legislator likes to have the honor of introducing a bill that will ultimately become a law.

Ex-Secretary Hughes refers to our legislatures as law factories.

Thousands of needless, useless and foolish laws are turned out from year to year.

No effort whatever is made to enforce many of these laws; but they are put on our records, and in many instances they are used to promote injustice rather than justice.

If this law-making habit continues at its present rate we will soon have so much law that it will be impossible to get justice.

A judge will ask, in the consideration of a case, not whether it is just or unjust, but, Is it lawful? Is it in accordance with the statutes?

When law interferes with justice it defeats its own object.

If we could only arouse a desire on the part of our legislators to annul some of our useless and foolish laws, if they could be made to see there is honor in

ridding our statute books of foolishness of this sort, it might be of great advantage to everybody.

Let us do what we can to make the idea fashionable and popular.

Hardly a day goes by that some one does not come in contact, directly or indirectly, with a law that is foolish to the last degree.

Why not start a campaign to get rid of these absurd enactments?

It is sometimes extremely difficult to secure the passage of a law that is seriously needed; but laws are known to "slip through," largely, in many instances, because no one is interested in them. They are passed along as a matter of course to please some legislator who wants to "stand in" with the folks back home.

Some day, when we acquire political sense of a dependable nature, laws will be put on trial. They will be tested for a year or two. They will be compelled to make good in a definite way before they will become a part of our legal records.

And at the same time it will be made just as easy to annul a law as it is to make one.

Our present restrictions seem to sanctify every law—good, bad or indifferent—and the difficulty of annulling an enactment that has once been passed is so great that people ignore it if it bothers them, and make no attempt to relieve themselves of these legal shackles that bind and handicap us to a certain extent whether we realize it or not.

"BERNARR MACFADDEN."

One of the most surprising attitudes of the newspaper was evidenced recently in its sporting pages. Even its worst enemies admit that the *Graphic* sporting and dramatic departments are among the most interesting in the city. Suddenly the *Graphic* came out against the free publicity carried in all newspapers about championship fights. The editorial, which started a great discussion, read in part as follows:

"Professional sports are in a bad way.

"They have become so groggy on prosperity that in many cases money and not the game has become their supreme consideration.

"Fair play is often buried six feet under ground while opinions of sporting writers are, in some cases, it is alleged, bought and paid for.

"There are few branches of sport that are unaffected by this menace of underhand commercialism, but professional boxing seems to be more thoroughly contaminated than any other.

"This newspaper calls upon all editors to take note of the insidious peril that now threatens not only to ruin sports, but to wreck confidence in the daily press.

"Let the fact be faced that boxing matches and other sporting events have become huge commercial enterprises.

"They are in precisely the same class as theatre, movie houses and other amusement businesses.

"There is no essential difference between them and the average store.

"Sports promoter and shopkeeper both have something to sell to the public. The store men have not tried to camouflage.

"They have earned the respect of the public and the publishers by honestly telling about their business in the business-like manner—through the medium of paid advertisements in the newspapers.

"Sports promoters have tried to gain their publicity by indirect payment for newspaper space. This for a time deceived the public. It has undoubtedly deceived some publishers. It will be an astounding thing to the latter to discover that paid reporters of their own staffs have been taking money and other gifts of value to sway their opinions.

"The sporting columns in many newspapers have fallen to a degrading level as a result of direct and indirect bribery.

"There is little truth in them.

"The dear public is being stuffed to the gills with paid publicity.

"There is a remedy for this rotten situation, and only one.

"That is for sports promoters to treat their enterprises as business undertakings and to advertise them at paid rates.

"That is the honest method pursued in England, where there never has been a whisper of press prostitution.

"The *Graphic* calls upon promoters and publishers

to adopt a similar straight-forward way out of the present unspeakably sour mess into which American sports have fallen.

"You can fool all of the people merely part of the time.

"And the time has just about arrived when you will no longer be able to deceive the public about professional sports!"

I have tried here to say what other people left unsaid about the *Graphic* and to point out, what many do not wish to see, that the paper is now finding itself and finding its course surely, steadily. Its amazing growth in circulation I have not touched upon, but there is no question that the paper is here to stay, and that it will become that influence in the city which its publisher intends. It is now housed in its own, modern building—one of the finest newspaper plants in New York.

During the stormy months of its beginning, there were many who were discouraged, but Macfadden refused to lose heart. At a time when people were wondering if he would abandon the project altogether, he astounded them by purchasing another newspaper. This was a Philadelphia tabloid, the *Daily News*. Within six months after he took it over it had trebled its circulation. It is now well on the way to success, and is a representative tabloid of the best class, winning its way into the hearts of the home people of its city.

Certainly one would think these two papers would be enough to keep Macfadden busy, but they are not. He started a third, a class daily for the automobile industry, which he called "The Automotive Daily News." Again he was regarded as an enthusiast with a fine but impossible dream. It was freely predicted the paper would not survive a year. It is now in its third year, making a profit, a solid and lasting success. Since then he has founded a new daily in Detroit, purchased a paper in New Haven, established an investment daily in New York City, and taken over several smaller newspapers.

And there you have Bernarr Macfadden, as hard at work today in his third phase of newspaper publisher, as he was when you first met him, doing the slavey jobs in a cheap little Mid-Western hotel. He has never known rest from the day he first faced the world without a father or a mother until now, when he is pushing these huge undertakings over the line to success.

What has such a strenuous life made of the man himself? What is he like, today—the man Macfadden?

Let us take a final glance at him and see for ourselves.

CHAPTER X

Bernarr Macfadden, Today

What has all this unexpected prosperity done to Macfadden?

We have seen him in his youth, struggling to keep himself alive. Later we have watched the growth in him of an idea, and the sacrifices he made for that idea, and its ultimate evolution into an immense and successful reality.

Has the man himself changed with the years?

They do say that with success invariably comes conservatism. The radical of today is the Tory of tomorrow. Has this been the history of Macfadden? In his youth he was fearless, and in his young manhood and early middle age he refused to compromise though surrounded by threats and dangers and intimidations. Has he, in the prosperous afternoon of his career, grown cautious? Did he lose his courage as he found his fortune?

Perhaps the frankest answer to that question may be told in the story of a journalistic experiment which he conducted, only a short while ago, in *Physical Culture Magazine*—an experiment which he undertook, quite realizing its dangers but convinced, nevertheless that it was right to do so.

It all began at a luncheon engagement of Macfadden with Judge Ben Lindsay, of Denver. At that time, Lindsay was in the throes of his final election fight with many antagonistic groups in Colorado. The two men were discussing juvenile delinquency, and Judge Lindsay began to expound some of his most radical conclusions, based on his observation of modern youth in the private chambers of his courtroom.

"All that would make a fascinating series of articles," said Macfadden. "Why don't you write it up for me?"

Judge Lindsay protested that he was not a writer, and told how several years previously, Harvey O'Higgins had visited Denver and collaborated with him on another subject.

"Why couldn't we do something like that again?" suggested Macfadden.

Editors from the Macfadden staff and business advisers were immediately called into conference and hours of fierce discussion followed. It was pointed out to Macfadden that there were many powerful forces of reaction arrayed against Judge Lindsay. To give him a hearing in *Physical Culture Magazine* might be going out of the way to invite the opposition of people who had no feeling at all against the publication itself.

"But these are not *my* ideas necessarily," protested Macfadden. "We can present them as representing one important man's opinion, and invite discussion.

The thing is too vital to be ignored. If what Judge Lindsay says about the young people of today is true, then the whole problem should be dragged out into the light. I do not say that I endorse the remedies suggested by the Judge. But at least he is entitled to suggest those remedies and we are entitled to agree with him, or not, as we think best. The important thing is to establish the correctness of his facts."

There were shrewd business advisers of Macfadden who thought this was a disastrous move. They said it was playing with fire. The magazine was going along very comfortably. Why try to unsettle its career with such a controversial series of very radical views?

What followed all the world knows—except that the real story has never before been told.

No book in the last decade has caused such a great social stir as *"The Revolt of Modern Youth,"* by Judge Ben Lindsay and Wainright Evans. It made a modest appearance, in a very limited edition, under the imprint of Boni and Liveright. But the demand soon exhausted the supply of books, edition after edition had to be printed, and *"The Revolt of Modern Youth"* eventually became a best seller—quite a while after its publication.

None of the learned discussions of the book which subsequently appeared in the high-brow weeklies and monthlies ever mentioned the fact that Bernarr Macfadden made that book possible.

It is doubtful if those intellectual giants who weight-

ily considered the matter even knew that Macfadden had anything to do with it.

Yet the facts show that he had everything to do with it. It was Macfadden who sent Wainright Evans, one of his staff writers, to Denver, and allowed him to remain there for months while the material for that book was being assembled.

It was Macfadden who, in the face of critical opposition in his own offices, published, *"The Revolt of Modern Youth"* as a series in *Physical Culture Magazine.* How many of the learned pundits who gravely considered the book knew its genesis, or would have mentioned it if they *had* known it?

I disclose this story here for the purpose only of showing that Macfadden has not softened with success. Before he even started, he knew that he was running a danger in publishing the Lindsay material in his magazine. In fact, a great number of letters were received, roundly condemning the first announcement that they were to appear. It is a great question if it was a wise publishing venture for Macfadden or not. But Macfadden put those considerations aside, because to him the whole problem was vital and important, and above the commercial viewpoint.

Still, it may be true that the years have taught Macfadden at least the wisdom of restraint. Perhaps he is not now so ready as once he was to quarrel with every enemy of civilization who crossed his path. But fundamentally Macfadden himself has not changed at all.

He still believes that health is the keynote of all happiness, that the medical profession is intolerant, that vaccination is a horrible misconception and that prudery is responsible for a great many of the evils of the time. And he continues to say so, monthly, weekly, daily in his publications—with the same spirit as of old.

Yet even after all that I have told you there are people who question his sincerity. It is such a frequent query that a long while back Macfadden tired of answering it. Many years ago there appeared in *Physical Culture Magazine* the following letter from a subscriber:

"Mr. Bernarr Macfadden:

So many, including myself, have become interested in your doctrines relative to health, that I make bold to ask you a question. In these days of skepticism and doubt of any man's good intentions, there has, as you know, been the question raised, 'Is Macfadden sincere, or is his magazine venture for money-making purposes solely?' Now I will confess I am inclined to believe in you, for I certainly do in your ideas. I believe you are right in nearly every instance. Of course, many here, as in other places, have objected to your publication on the grounds of indecency, but you have anticipated, I see, and answered them. No rightminded man or woman can, however, take exception to anything that you have ever published. At all events, you are bound to win on the line you have drawn. . . . If you

will answer this question, I shall take it as that of a gentleman, and final."

Macfadden's answer ran as follows:

"I have received several letters similar to the above. Am I honest? Am I working merely for the money there is in this business? Or am I a sincere reformer, who desires to elevate, strengthen, and ennoble his fellow-men?

"These questions have no doubt been asked often enough by my readers.

"Whatever may be your opinions, my friends, you will all admit that I have done much studying along original lines; that I have left the beaten track and have searched for new light, new truths; that I have been a diligent student of the conditions that confront the age. This being the case, I have naturally formed conclusions upon subjects not closely identified with health and strength.

"I have asked myself, of what value is money? The answer has come back clear, strong, and emphatic: Money, beyond the amount needed for the necessities of life, is a curse to those who have not learned to use it wisely. One cannot wear more than one suit of clothes with comfort, nor can he eat more than his body needs without suffering. My personal expenses are not any more now than they were when my time was occupied giving lessons in physical culture. All the style and hypocritical attempts to impress others with your importance by outward display of costly

Mr. Macfadden at his desk where he now holds the reins of nearly a score of magazines, two great metropolitan newspapers, and other enterprises.

Group of Macfadden buildings in which are edited and published the many magazines, newspapers and books of the House of Macfadden.

clothing or richly furnished houses has never in the faintest manner appealed to me.

"Therefore the only object I could have in acquiring financial wealth would be the supposed honor of being considered a rich man. I never saw or heard of a rich man that I envied. I would not exchange personalities with one even if the whole earth had been deeded to him. I never had a desire to be rich. I never tried to save a dollar until about four years ago, when I discovered that my life work could not be accomplished without money. Then I began to save and work. My magazines and books are the results of these efforts, and I might add that they are only the beginning. I want to charge the civilized world with a desire to develop the noblest possession of complete manhood and womanhood."

And since that time, almost a quarter of a century ago, I do not believe that Macfadden has ever troubled to answer directly the charge of insincerity. He has been content to let his work speak for itself, and let friends and enemies alike draw what deduction they cared to from his actions.

But there was one deed that this man did which should have attested, even to the most callous, the deep sincerity which actuated him.

For many years it had been Macfadden's hope that a son would be born to him. There were four daughters in his home—Byrnece, Beulah, Braunda and Beverly—and both Mrs. Macfadden and he wanted a son.

It was then that he undertook an intense study into the mysterious almost unexplored subject of sex determination.

The whole idea of sex determination was admittedly empirical. Most physicians were satisfied that the principle was beyond human apprehension. Some blind force of nature, they believed, was working to keep the balance of population as it should be. While here and there a few scientists did potter with the problem, there was no great or real scientific interest in the subject.

This, however, did not discourage Macfadden, even though, after the birth of their fourth daughter, Mrs. Macfadden was herself discouraged and felt that they were not ever to be blessed with a boy. Instead, Macfadden applied himself unceasingly and unremittingly to studying all the available data on the subject. His prolonged researches, during which he had a number of students working under his direction, led him back even to the Mosaic sanitary codes as practiced by the orthodox Jews for unnumbered centuries.

Finally Macfadden came to the conclusion that he had discovered the practical principle of sex determination. He believed that parents had the power to decide in advance whether their child should be a girl or a boy—and that he had discovered how to master and apply that power.

Of course this sounded preposterous. Any physician will tell you today that it is unscientific nonsense.

But you, who have followed Bernarr Macfadden from the Missouri farm to his Broadway office building, are or should be aware by this time that the man insists that results alone are what counts.

With a curious courage, he promptly announced in *Physical Culture Magazine* that he believed he had made this discovery. Moreover, he stated that he was certain the principle would prove correct in nine cases out of every ten, and that for himself he was willing to predict then and there that the next child born to Mrs. Macfadden would be a man child.

With a history of four girls in succession already born to him, and two girls by his former marriage, this did indeed show what confidence he had in his conclusions, and what courage he possessed in enunciating them.

The fact is that a boy baby *was* born to Mrs. Macfadden within a year. That is startling enough and significant enough. But what should really give every scientist and every physician pause, what should start research on this problem in every university in the world, is the vastly more important fact that in succession *two more sons* have been born to Macfadden, two strong and healthy youngsters who he offers as a triumphant vindication of the simple biological principle which he invoked in his search for a son and heir.

I wish there were space to prolong this discussion. To me it appears of immense importance. It is incidental, however, to what I started out to produce,—

the final and convincing evidence of Macfadden's sincerity. Even a stranger can understand with what intense delight that first-born son was welcomed into the Macfadden household. Although his name was Byron, they called him Billy—little Billy—and he was the little hero of that home.

But little Billy died.

He had a fall, and convulsions followed, and the little life that was so beloved was taken away. When that tragedy invaded their home, Macfadden was bowed with grief. And in that grief and woe and utter agony, he sat down and wrote an editorial about the death of the child, for *Physical Culture Magazine.* In its self-revelation it is certainly the most significant thing that Bernarr Macfadden ever wrote. I quote it here in full; let all who will, read it and then rise up and say whether Macfadden is sincere or not.

"The Story of Little Billy"

Little Billy has passed into the Great Beyond.

He remained with us but eleven months.

Billy was his pet name. It seemed to fit him so well. He was such a manly little fellow, so strong, vigorous, and self-assertive.

Byron Macfadden was his real name.

Ah, but he had such a wonderful smile. It was like a little bit of heaven.

And when he turned that dazzling smile full upon you, your heart was won completely. He had so

wound himself into our affections that he was infinitely dear to us. He had become a great big part of our home life. His welcoming smile was an important phase of my home-coming each day. Even his little sisters, not many years older than he, grew to love him most tenderly.

And the possibility of losing our little Billy! Why, it never occurred to us at any time! The thought of such a catastrophe would have been considered a wild dream.

But the time came when he had to go, and the scorching, heart-searing sorrow that we had to endure cannot be described. Words are so absolutely meaningless at such times! They cannot even attempt to describe the pain that seemed to rend our very soul.

And what made the appalling loss immeasurably worse was a full realization on our part that there was a possibility of our being, partly, at least, to blame—that his death might have been avoided.

A few days previous to the series of convulsions that preceded his passing away he had had a serious fall, and we believe that this accident undoubtedly in some way helped to bring about the fatal outcome.

But we had depended too much upon his great strength and vitality. We were too confident of his ability to throw aside any physical difficulties that might come his way, and we have to acknowledge that we might easily have been more careful.

The mother love in Billy's case was unusually in-

tense. He was the first boy, and the mother's heart went out to him with really terrible devotion. And the dear little fellow seemed to return that love.

Mother love is perhaps the most beautiful of all things human, though there is but little intelligence associated with it. It is simply a mad devotion of the mother for the object of her affection.

And so it was with Billy.

Billy had that dominating way that was hard to resist. He usually had what he wanted. Frequently he would even dictate as to his feeding time. He had the lungs of a young panther, and when he howled for milk it was hard for mother to refuse.

And consequently Billy was often over-fed. I protested on numerous occasions, especially when I found that he was consuming nearly two quarts of milk a day when one quart was about sufficient for him.

But my protest was not vigorous enough. Anyway, I believed the boy was so strong that he would overcome mistakes of that nature. And it is so hard to combat the tendencies of mother love.

I also somewhat blame myself for neglecting his exercises. At the age of two or three months I began to give him various exercises, and he reciprocated so vehemently that I saw slight signs of his becoming bow-legged. His legs were unusually strong, and he would bob up to a standing position at the least temptation in that direction. Consequently, I discontinued his special exercises. Later I concluded that the exer-

cise he secured from crawling around the floor was sufficient.

And I never began the systematic exercises that had been arranged for him.

I played with him at frequent intervals. I enjoyed the radiant smile that he turned my way. In the mornings he would peek out of his crib at me, play hide and seek, and, until the thought of feeding marred his countenance, he beamed with animated delight.

Often mothers go into details when describing the irksome character of the responsibilities associated with the care of a baby. But if the mother love is there, she is influenced momentarily by a twisted viewpoint, and it takes something like the possibility of losing her baby to make her realize the true situation.

In attempting to assuage the heart-gripping grief that came to us in our loss, a friend wrote:

"What hurts most is just the unbearable wound of missing your loved one, and here I can say something positive out of my own experience. The baby who goes, often comes closer to you than those who remain. My two boys are growing up. Their babyhood is vanishing. I no longer have them as babies.

"But the baby who died I have with me always. She has become a part of me. A beautiful, inspiring, changeless part.

"I remember the old foolish days and nights when I would grope about in the dark cellar, kissing her

crib, her high chair, frantic in my longing for her return. That passed, and she really seemed to come back, not in any superstitious, ghostly way, but just to steal inside of me, to become a part of me. A sweet, strong something that I can never lose unless I am false to the ideals I have tried to follow."

Many parents blame the Almighty for the loss of their little ones. It is because of this tendency that the sorrow that has come to us is, in a small way, passed on to our friends. Don't be as over-confident as we were. Be prepared for emergencies by maintaining the vitality of your child at the highest possible point.

We are baring our hearts in this sorrow as a lesson to parents everywhere. Many think that because of my beliefs there would be no mistakes made in my home, but it is largely because of over-confidence in one's ability to overcome any difficulty that mistakes at times are made, and allowed for long periods to go uncorrected.

In an editorial appearing in these columns on one occasion, I said whenever I saw a white hearse, headed for the cemetery, I believed that it represented an unnecessary death.

And I believe it now just as much as I ever did.

And when I followed the white hearse of my own child to the cemetery, the poignant grief that stunned me was more unbearable because of the full realization of the truth of that statement.

God had not taken away our child. He had gone

because of the absolute and unchangeable law of cause and effect. When a child is born with sufficient vitality to breathe the breath of life, with reasonably proper care it should grow into the complete fulness of adult manhood or womanhood.

We should not blame our faults on the Almighty, and it is time for parents everywhere to realize their own responsibilities and to stop blaming God for their own neglect and indifference to the needs and responsibilities of parenthood.

When the crisis came in Billy's case, the exact same methods that were used so effectively with all our children, and in vast numbers of cases in homes where drugless methods are favorable reaction did not take place will always be a puzzling problem to me. The medical and non-medical practitioners who were called on the case rendered conscientious service, but without avail.

It has been said that every great sorrow has a beneficent purpose back of it. Perhaps this is true in this instance, but it is indeed hard for us to accept that viewpoint.

We have bared our hearts with the hope that the lesson taught by our experience will bear fruit in the form of better care for beloved children in every home."

No comment is needed on that editorial.

Nor do I think any comment is needed on the life of Bernarr Macfadden as he lives it to this day. His

is still the austere diet that might shame an eremite, seeking holiness in the inhospitable desert. He still walks interminably, in sleet and heat, through the streets of New York, a solitary, thinking figure, planning new projects, considering new experiments, dreaming new dreams. When Macfadden ceases to dream, Macfadden will cease to be.

See him now with me, from his rising up until his lying down in these latter days when so much of power and influence is delivered into his hands. See him, rigid in the pursuit of those Spartan exercises which have hardened his body and kept him strong. See him denying himself all those tempting foods which he believes poison the body and shorten life. Watch him rearing that happy family, playing games with them, laughing with them, teaching them the lessons of life so that shame does not narrow their eyes or blush their cheeks. Listen to him dictating editorial after editorial in which, with the same robust frenzy of his earlier days, he proclaims that gospel which to him is truly divine. Study him as he governs a whole community of employes, that is like a little city, busy all day at the head of his affairs, cognizant of all its departments and all his ventures, chastening here and encouraging there, and seeking everywhere to inspire his people with his own fire.

Observe him, now, in the full enjoyment of his prosperity, toasted and feted by the powerful men of his city, with praises of governor and mayor and United

States senator, millionaire and poet, confusing his ears —and observe that when he rises to reply at this famous banquet given in his honor, he entreats them to take care of their health. That is his reply to their adulatory speeches. See him, still unafraid, still denounced, still sure that he is right, still ready for the new thing —see him in all these hours until at last he lies down on the hard floor which he makes his bed. See him so and you will still see a light in his eyes that never tires, even when sleep is overtaking him; a zest, an interest, a readiness for life.

What is its secret—the secret of that unresting light?

Ask him and he will tell you simply that it is good health, hardly won; strength, vitality, clear blood and a firm stomach. And then ask him, finally, to sum it all up for you and he will tell you today, just as he would have told you forty years ago—"Physical Culture."

No. Macfadden, the real Macfadden, hasn't changed, nor will he ever change.

[THE END]

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